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## Hamsun's "Growth of the Soil"

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IN THE SUMMER of 1916 Hamsun wrote a note to his publisher, announcing that he was deeply immersed in a new novel, but that it could not be finished for the Christmas book season. "I have something good, and it is well begun," he writes, "but it is too big in its plan, and I shall certainly not have it finished." Later, in the fall, while he was much taken up by certain details connected with the proposed sale of his farm in Larvik, he admitted that he found it very hard to write, or even to work on the soil, "which was the happiest thing I knew. Sweat now pours off me if only a cow gets loose or the chickens break in upon my neighbor's land. . . . And I, who have a great work under way which should be a challenge to my generation! I know well that the world can do without me, but—"

The work to which Hamsun refers is *Growth of the Soil*. It appeared in the fall of 1917; and its instantaneous success, in Norway, and in translated form in nearly every country in the world, has demonstrated that Hamsun was not wrong when he referred to it, even while it was in the process of becoming, as "something good . . . big in its plan" and "a great work . . . which should be a challenge to my generation." It was all of this; and today by almost unanimous critical consent it is admitted to be the greatest of Hamsun's novels. One is reminded, as one reads Hamsun's words about his great novel, of certain prophetic words written by one of the great masters of English poetry—"One day I shall write a book which the world will not willingly let die." And when one has read the great Norwegian prose epic *Growth of the Soil*, one feels that to link Hamsun thus with Milton is not to do an injustice

to the great master of the English poetic epic of more than two centuries and a half ago.

And yet what a difference between *Paradise Lost* and *Growth of the Soil*! . . . Milton, in whose genius is magnificently merged the double artistic tradition of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, works out a poetic tapestry of rich and intricate pattern—colorful, musical, everywhere instinct with the weight of whole civilizations of culture. Hamsun, the modern child of a more primitive artistic tradition, writes simply, with a strangely effective laconic terseness: his manner bare, firm, almost stolid in its refusal to indulge in rhetorical poetic flights. . . . Milton sings of angels and archangels, of the succession of hierarchies culminating in the Godhead—too often, perhaps, forgetting to keep Adam, and *his* tragedy, at the center of the poet's picture, too often forsaking the solid things of the earth for the magic music of the spheres. Hamsun, on the other hand, remains ever firmly on earth: mysteries enough his Isak comes upon, but they are not garbed in the imagery of a long ecclesiastical tradition. . . . Milton boldly and solemnly announces his theme in the opening lines of his epic. Hamsun, less bold, less formal, *insinuates* his theme, quietly, simply, usually in a loose, fragmentary form, into the very fabric of his story. . . . Milton approaches his ethical problem largely in terms of a traditional theology. Hamsun, scarcely less interested in the problem of evil, approaches the moral issue free of any traditional preconceptions either as to the nature of evil or the way of salvation. . . .

Everywhere does one find such contrasts as these between *Paradise Lost* and *Growth of the Soil*; and the contrasts, it might be said, represent the difference between a world of form and idea still steeped in a mass of literary and ecclesiastical traditions and a modern world in which the artistic spirit has been permitted to move more easily, more freely, less weighed down by ideas and forms encased in a world of tradition.

It is a simple story that unfolds itself in the pages of *Growth of the Soil*—the simple story of a simple man, Isak by name, who comes at first alone into an uninhabited wilderness, and by hard, persistent labor finally conquers the soil and builds Sellanraa farm, which ultimately produces for him and the family that comes to him all of the necessities of life. It is a story of the blessing that human labor can bring to the soil when it works in close collaboration with nature. "The wilderness was inhabited and unrecognizable," we are told, after we have followed the fruitful pioneer work of Isak for some years; "a blessing had come upon it, life had arisen there from a long dream, human creatures lived there, children played about the houses. And the forest

stretched away, big and kindly, right up to the blue heights." And yet nature is not always smiling and helpful to these children of "the great Almenning"—drouths come, and lean seasons. Still, on the whole, and in the long run, nature is ready to cooperate with men of simple industry and dogged perseverance. It is civilization, not nature, that gradually comes to bring pestilence into the life of man; and though Isak himself has the solid stability which withstands the canker of civilization, his family is not always as strong as he.

The purely artistic triumph that Hamsun attains in his novel lies largely, perhaps, in his ability to reduce life to its simplest, most elemental forms, disdaining completely certain romantic techniques of story-telling often employed by even the best of novelists. Hardy, for example, in *The Return of the Native*, must make central in his story of an otherwise essentially rural Egdon Heath the mysteriously exotic character of Eustacia Vye. With Hamsun in *Growth of the Soil* there is nothing of this kind. His central characters, Isak and Inger, are simple souls, and neither of them, we are assured, is beautiful to look upon. Of Isak—"the man . . . was no way charming or pleasant by his looks, far from it; and when he spoke it was no tenor with eyes to heaven, but a coarse voice, something like a beast's." Of Inger—"a big, brown-eyed girl, full-built and coarse, with good heavy hands, and rough hide brogues on her feet as if she had been a Lapp, and a calfskin bag slung from her shoulders. Not altogether young; speaking politely, somewhere nearing thirty." And of the two of them, after their mating—

And now it was another life for the solitary man. True, this wife of his had a curious slovenly way of speech, and always turning her face aside, by reason of a hare-lip that she had, but that was no matter. Save that her mouth was disfigured, she would hardly have come to him at all; he might well be grateful that she was marked with a hare-lip. And as to that, he himself was no beauty. Isak with the iron beard and rugged body, a grim and surly figure of a man; ay, as a man seen through a flaw in the window-pane. His look was not a gentle one; as if Barabbas might break loose at any minute. It was a wonder Inger herself did not run away.

The events of the story are as unassuming as the characters—unassuming, and yet basic, for they treat with a direct, laconic simplicity of such natural phenomena as birth and growth and death, of human mating, of man earning his bread by the sweat of his brow. And with an unerring sense of the appropriate, Hamsun no more seeks to surround these fundamental functions of life with the sentimental trumpery of the average novelist than he tries to make Inger beautiful or Isak handsome.

Out of such material as this it is that Hamsun's theme gradually emerges: man has all he needs when he is at work close to the soil—the so-called "values of civilization" being in reality merely will-o'-the-

wisps that man pursues always at his own risk. Nowhere in the novel is this theme more suggestively put than in a passage coming close on the heels of the account of the collapse of certain mining operations near Sellanraa. This exigency had violently upset the calculations of one Andresen, a merchant who had established himself in the neighborhood for the purpose of profiting from the industrial development; but it had only momentarily disturbed the equilibrium of most of the peasant settlers in the region.

. . . Folk and things were unaltered; the mining work had turned away to other tracts, but folk in the wilds had not lost their heads over that; they had their land to till, their crops, their cattle. No great wealth in money, true, but in all the necessities of life, ay, absolutely all. . . .

No, a man of the wilds did not lose his head. The air was not less healthy now than before; there were folk enough to admire new clothes; there was no need of diamonds. Wine was a thing he knew from the feast at Cana. A man of the wilds was not put out by the thought of great things he could not get: art, newspapers, luxuries, politics, and such-like were worth just what folk were willing to pay for them, no more. Growth of the soil was something different, a thing to be procured at any cost; the only source, the origin of all. A dull and desolate existence? Nay, least of all. A man had everything; his powers above, his dreams, his loves, his wealth of superstition. Sivert, walking one evening by the river, stops on a sudden; there on the water are a pair of ducks, male and female. They have sighted him; they are aware of man, and afraid; one of them says something, utters a little sound, a melody in three tones, and the other answers with the same. Then they rise, whirl off like two little wheels a stone's-throw up the river, and settle again. Then, as before, one speaks and the other answers; the same speech as at first, but mark a new delight: *it is set two octaves higher!* Sivert stands looking at the birds, looking past them, far into a dream. A sound had floated through him, a sweetness, and left him standing there with a delicate, thin recollection of something wild and splendid, something he had known before, and forgotten again. He walks home in silence, says no word of it, makes no boast of it, 'twas not for worldly speech. And it was but Sivert from Sellanraa, went out one evening, young and ordinary as he was, and met with this.

The wilderness has all, yes—food and clothing and shelter in plenty for those who will work . . . and so much more, even, for those who work and are sometimes fain to dream.

It should be emphasized that Hamsun's conclusions in *Growth of the Soil* on the relation of man to the soil and the deteriorating effects on man of an industrial civilization were not inspired by the naïve creative desire simply to give renewed expression to one of the forms of an old romantic nostalgia. It would be easy to demonstrate that the story contained in *Growth of the Soil* is rather the inevitable logical result of his artistic and intellectual development in the years before 1917. It should be remembered also that Hamsun himself had turned farmer in 1911, settling down on a farm in Nordland, which he did not abandon until the year that *Growth of the Soil* was published in 1917, and then



taking up another rural holding in more southerly regions at Larvik. Though he, of course, had help on the farm in order to have time over for his literary work, he was not merely a "gentleman farmer" in the usual sense of this phrase. During these years he took an active part in the work on his own farm; and his growing theoretical interest in the problem of man and his relationship to the soil is amply attested by numerous articles on the subject which he contributed to newspapers and journals in the years just before the publication of *Growth of the Soil*. One is reminded of Tolstoi and the Yasnaya Polyana days.

It may be significant, moreover, in considering those forces which led Hamsun to the conclusions reached in *Growth of the Soil*, that the pages of this novel were penned in the heart of the War years. Nowhere in the novel does one come upon any specific evidences to justify the supposition that Hamsun was reacting against an over-developed civilization which had made possible the fearful carnage of the World War, and no other evidence, so far as I know, has been turned up to prove the point. Still one is prone to suspect that such evidence is to be found, probably hidden away in some Norwegian provincial newspaper files from these years. In any event, it seems difficult to believe that Hamsun was not aware of the arguments against a modern war implicit in the general thesis of *Growth of the Soil*. The problem treated in *Growth of the Soil* is a universal problem, everywhere and at all times present; and so Hamsun sees no necessity of narrowing his argument or its application to any particular time or place. It is simply a story of *man*—not *a man*—at work with nature; it relates the epic struggle between the eternal processes of nature and an encroaching modern industrial civilization. The World War—being peculiarly destructive because a modern industry provided the belligerent nations with weapons never previously known in the history of warfare—must have seemed peculiarly horrible and futile to the man who, in the healthy rural isolation of Nordland, was composing *Growth of the Soil* in the years 1916 and 1917.

One need not read beyond the first chapter of the novel to see that Hamsun intended his story to be universal in its appeal and in its application; and all the succeeding chapters confirm this first impression, culminating ultimately in the magnificently conceived simplicity and power of the final paragraphs of the last chapter—

Isak at his sowing; a stump of a man, a barge of a man to look at, nothing more. Clad in homespun—wool from his own sheep, boots from the hide of his own cows and calves. Sowing—and he walks religiously bareheaded to that work; his head is bald just at the very top, but all the rest of him shamefully hairy; a fan, a wheel of hair and beard, stands out from his face. 'Tis Isak, the Margrave.

'Twas rarely he knew the day of the month—what need had he of that? He had

no bills to be met on a certain date; the marks on his almanac were to show the time when each of the cows should bear. But he knew St. Olaf's Day in the autumn, that by then his hay must be in, and he knew Candlemas in spring, and that three weeks after then the bears came out of their winter quarters; all seed must be in the earth by then. He knew what was needful.

A tiller of the soil, body and soul; a worker on the land without respite. A ghost risen out of the past to point the future, a man from the earliest days of cultivation, a settler in the wilds, nine hundred years old, and, withal, a man of the day.

Nay, there was nothing left to him now of the copper mine and its riches—the money had vanished into air. And who had anything left of all that wealth when the working stopped, and the hills lay dead and deserted? But the *Almenning* was there still, and the new holdings on that land, beckoning a hundred more.

Nothing growing there? All things growing there: men and beasts and fruit of the soil. Isak sowing his corn. The evening sunlight falls on the corn that flashes out in an arc from his hand, and falls like a dropping of gold to the ground. Here comes Sivert to the harrowing; after that the roller, and then the harrow again. Forest and field look on. All is majesty and power—a sequence and purpose of things.

*Kling . . . eling . . .* say the cow bells far up on the hillside, coming nearer and nearer; the cattle are coming home for the night. Fifteen head of them, and five-and-forty sheep and goats besides; threescore in all. There go the women out with their milk-pails, carried on yokes from the shoulder: Leopoldine, Jensine, and little Rebecca. All three barefooted. The Margravine, Inger herself, is not with them; she is indoors preparing the meal. Tall and stately, as she moves about her house, a Vestal tending the fire of a kitchen stove. Inger has made her stormy voyage, 'tis true, has lived in a city a while, but now she is home; the world is wide, swarming with tiny specks—Inger has been one of them. All but nothing in all humanity, only one speck.

Then comes the evening.

How inevitably the elevated, universal tone of this closing scene turns the reader's memory back to the first scene in the novel—Isak, alone at first, struggling through the wilderness, plodding across the far-stretching, seemingly interminable hills . . . seeking, seeking.

The long, long road over the moors and up into the forest—who trod it into being first of all? Man, a human being, the first that came here. There was no path before he came. Afterward, some beast or other, following the faint tracks over marsh and moorland, wearing them deeper; after these again some Lapp gained scent of the path, and took that way from field to field, looking to his reindeer. Thus was made the road through the great *Almenning*—the common tracts without an owner; no-man's-land.

The man comes, walking toward the north. He bears a sack, the first sack, carrying food and some few implements. A strong, coarse fellow, with a red iron beard, and little scars on face and hands; sites of old wounds—were they gained in toil or fight? Maybe the man has been in prison, and is looking for a place to hide; or a philosopher, maybe, in search of peace. This or that, he comes; the figure of a man in this great solitude. . . .

The man is a settler; he is intent upon finding a desirable spot in this wilderness—a place where he can till the soil. At last he finds it.

The worst of his task had been to find the place; this no-man's-place, but his. Now there was work to fill his days. He started at once, stripping birch bark in the woods farther off, while the sap was still in the trees. The bark he pressed and dried, and when he had gathered a heavy load, carried it all the miles back to the village, to be sold for building. Then back to the hillside, with new sacks of food and implements; flour and pork, a cooking-pot, a spade—out and back along the way he had come, carrying loads all the time. A born carrier of loads, a lumbering barge of a man in the forest—oh, as if he loved his calling, tramping long roads and carrying heavy burdens; as if life without a load upon one's shoulders were a miserable thing, no life for him.

It is significant that we do not even know his name at first—"The *man* comes walking to the north." A *worker* he is—"a born carrier of loads. . . ." Neither in time nor in space is he localized—merely "a lumbering barge of a man *in the forest*. . . ." What matters it where he struggles? or in what period of time? He is the eternal symbol of the Worker, the eternal Sower—in all generations, in all climes, "a ghost risen out of the past to point the future, a man from the earliest days of cultivation, a settler in the wilds, nine hundred years old and, withal, a man of the day."

A symbol, yes. . . . Yet what a warmly *human* symbol this "barge of a man" is: strong as an ox, stubbornly persistent in his work, nearly always triumphant in his generation-long struggle with nature, almost a superman in a primitive world of heavy daily tasks this Isak is. And still so naïvely human in his innermost self. Hamsun never seems to tire, in depicting Isak's early years with Inger, to throw a roguish, kindly searchlight upon Isak's little vanities, especially his childish delight at words or looks of praise from Inger when he has performed some particularly praiseworthy task. One day "he brought home a basket of fish that Inger would open her eyes to see!" Another day he was condescendingly mysterious toward Inger when she inquired as to the purpose of certain preliminary building activities which he was attending to on the farm—"Poor Inger, not so eternally wise as he, as Isak, that lord of creation." Still another day he startled Inger into a vast new admiration by having walked the long way from the village,

with a cooking-stove, a barge of a man surging up through the forest with a whole iron stove on his back. "Tis more than a man can do," said Inger. "You'll kill yourself that gait." But Isak pulled down the stone hearth, that didn't look so well in the new house, and set up the cooking-stove in its place. "'Tisn't every one has a cooking-stove," said Inger. "Of all the wonders, how we're getting on! . . ."

And when Inger one day outdoes Isak at his own game by returning to Sellanraa with a cow, after a visit to her parents' place, Isak has no rest until he produces an even greater wonder here in the wilderness—a horse! Perhaps the most riotously roguish bit of humor that Hamsun

creates at Isak's expense is his description of Isak's demonstration of the new mowing-machine that he had bought secretly down in the village and had quietly transported to the neighborhood of Sellanraa.

. . . There it stands, wrapped up in sacking and paper; he uncovers it, and lo, a huge machine. Look! red and blue, wonderful to see, with a heap of teeth and a heap of knives, with joints and arms and screws and wheels—a mowing-machine. . . .

He stands with a marvelously keen expression, going over in his mind from beginning to end the instructions for use that the storekeeper had read out; he sets a spring here, and shifts a bolt there, then he oils every hole and every crevice, then he looks over the whole thing once more. Isak had never known such an hour in his life. To pick up a pen and write one's mark on a paper, a document—ay, 'twas a perilous great thing that, no doubt. Likewise in the matter of a new harrow he had once brought up—there were many curiously twisted parts in that to be considered. Not to speak of the great circular saw that had to be set in its course to the nicety of a pencil line, never swaying east nor west, lest it should fly asunder. But this—this mowing-machine of his—'twas a crawling nest of steel springs and hooks and apparatus, and hundreds of screws—Inger's sewing-machine was a bookmarker compared with this!

Isak is ready now to demonstrate the machine before his admiring house-folk.

Swelling with mystery, full of pride; with a little lift and throw from the knee at every step, so emphatically did he walk. So a brave man might walk to death and destruction, carrying no weapon in his hand.

The boys came up with the horse, saw the machine, and stopped dead. It was the first mowing-machine in the wilds, the first in the village—red and blue, a thing of splendor to man's eyes. And the father, head of them all, called out, oh, in a careless tone, as if it were nothing uncommon: "Harness up to this machine here."

Difficulties arise—the machine does not run immediately as it was expected to do; but the boys help figure out the mysterious book of directions, and again all is well.

Isak drives and drives, and everything goes well, and Brrr! says the machine. There is a broad track of cut grass in his wake, neatly in line, ready to take up. Now they see him from the house, and all the womenfolk come out; Inger carries little Rebecca on her arm, though little Rebecca has learned to walk by herself long since. But there they come—four womenfolk, big and small—hurrying with straining eyes down towards the miracle, flocking down to see. Oh, but now is Isak's hour. Now he is truly proud, a mighty man, sitting high aloft dressed in holiday clothes, in all his finery; in jacket and hat, though the sweat is pouring off him. He swings round in four big angles, goes over a good bit of ground, swings round, drives, cuts grass, passes along by where the women are standing; they are dumbfounded, it is all beyond them, and Brrr! says the machine.

Then Isak stops and gets down. Longing, no doubt, to hear what these folk on earth down there will say; what they will find to say about it all. He hears smothered cries; they fear to disturb him, these beings on earth, in his lordly work, but they turn to one another with awed questionings, and he hears what they say. And now, that he may be a kind and fatherly lord and ruler to them all, to encourage them, he says: "There, I'll just do this bit, and you can spread it tomorrow."



"Haven't you time to come in and have a bite of food?" says Inger, all overwhelmed.

"Nay, I've other things to do," he answers.

Then he oils the machine again; gives them to understand that he is occupied with scientific work. Drives off again, cutting more grass. And, at long last, the womenfolk go back home.

Happy Isak—happy folk at Sellanraa!

Kindly is all of this humor, with no note of cutting satire in it; for Hamsun loves his Isak and the simple folk at Sellanraa farm as he has loved none of his other creations. And this humor of Hamsun's—in the early parts of the novel so bantering, so sly, so robustly roguish—ultimately comes to reveal another, profounder side, as does all great, abiding humor. When we get more deeply into the story of Isak and Inger, we find Hamsun's roguish spirit blending almost imperceptibly into that phase of all great humor which we call pathos—a profound, warmly human pathos in Hamsun, capable of a rich, understanding sympathy toward his chief characters in the hour of their trials.

Much as some critics have made of certain of the undeniably great passages in *Growth of the Soil*, particularly those passages which lend a tone of dignified epic elevation to the story of Sellanraa farm, I have never felt that such passages are Hamsun's greatest creative achievement in the novel. More beautiful, I feel, is Hamsun's treatment of a couple of episodes in the novel which center their attention on the relation between man and woman, Isak and Inger, during moments of deep inner strain and violent potential conflict. At no other point in *Growth of the Soil*, or for that matter in none of Hamsun's novels, do we come upon a more mellow, understanding, profoundly sympathetic Hamsun—nor a Hamsun who is a more delicately sensitive *artist*. The first of these episodes brings to us the laconically tender description of Isak's and Inger's instinctive drawing together, like animals who sense danger, during those months when the shadow of prison walls was the immediate prospect for Inger because she had strangled the child born with a hare-lip—

And their great sorrow and disaster—ay, it was there, the thing was done, and what it brought must come. Good things mostly leave no trace, but something always comes of evil. Isak took the matter sensibly from the first. He made no great words about it, but asked his wife simply: "How did you come to do it?" Inger made no answer to that. And a little after, he spoke again: "Strangled it—was that what you did?"

"Yes," said Inger.

"You shouldn't have done that."

"No," she agreed.

"And I can't make out how you ever could bring yourself to do it."

"She was all the same as myself," said Inger.

"How d'you mean?"

"Her mouth."

Isak thought over that for some time. "Ay, well," said he.

And nothing more was said about it at the time; the days went on, peacefully as ever; there was all the mass of hay to be got in, and a rare heavy crop all round, so that by degrees the thing slipped into the background of their minds. . . .

Isak took the matter sensibly—what else was there to do? He knew now why Inger had always taken care to be left alone at every birth; to be alone with her fears of how the child might be, and face the danger with no one by. Three times she had done the same thing. Isak shook his head, touched with pity for her ill fate—poor Inger. He learned of the coming of the Lapp with the hare, and acquitted her. It led to a great love between them, a wild love; they drew closer to each other in their peril. Inger was full of a desperate sweetness towards him, and the great heavy fellow, lumbering carrier of burdens, felt a greed and an endless desire for her in himself.

. . .

The second episode is a similarly understanding treatment of a certain feminine waywardness of Inger's after her return from prison, where she had learned some of the precarious ways of "civilization." She was momentarily wayward, Hamsun would have us know—but never viciously so. She was, in the final analysis, too much of a sound, healthy child of nature to be vicious. She had her sexual "adventures"; but they were normal, natural—scarcely blameworthy in any final sense. And her conscience is not inactive, a conscience which finds expression in various ways—each of them good for her, perhaps. None of them seemed quite as efficacious, however, as a simple confession that she brought one evening to Isak—Isak, her lord, good, simple, understanding man, who in his awkward fumbling with the elusive concepts of good and evil comes, after all, to the heart of the whole matter when he concludes, simply, "None of us can be as we ought." The episode should be quoted in its entirety.

. . . One night she lifted up on her elbow and said:

"Isak?"

"What is it?" says Isak.

"Are you awake?"

"Ay."

"Nay, 'twas nothing," says Inger. "But I've not been all as I ought."

"What?" says Isak. Ay, so much he said, and rose up on his elbow in turn.

They lay there, and went on talking. Inger is a matchless woman, after all; and with a full heart, "I've not been as I ought towards you," she says, "and I'm that sorry about it."

The simple words move him; this barge of a man is touched, ay, he wants to comfort her, knowing nothing of what is the matter, but only that there is none like her. "Naught to cry about, my dear," says Isak. "There's none of us can be as we ought."

"Nay, 'tis true," she answers gratefully. Oh, Isak had a strong, sound way of taking things; straightened them out, he did, when they turned crooked. "None of us can be as we ought." Ay, he was right. The god of the heart—for all that he is a god,

he goes a deal of crooked ways, goes out adventuring, the wild thing that he is, and we can see it in his looks. One day rolling in a bed of roses and licking his lips and remembering things; next day with a thorn in his foot, desperately trying to get it out. Die of it? Never a bit, he's as well as ever. A nice lookout it would be if he were to die.

And Inger's trouble passed off too; she got over it, but she keeps on with her hours of devotion, and finds a merciful refuge there. Hard-working and patient and good she is now every day, knowing Isak different from all other men, and wanting none but him. . . .

A mellow, all-embracing human sympathy, ready to forgive and to forget, incapable of bearing a grudge or passing a final judgment—this is the impressive moral stature to which Isak attains in his quiet, simple, lumbering way. There is nothing of false heroics here, nothing of the cheap, or the theatrical—only a man who believes in the existence of right and wrong, but who does not believe that wrong should be long remembered or brooded over, for nature herself will seek a balance between good and evil and provide at the last any judgment upon man or beast which a sin against nature might perchance incur.

And it is in the spirit of Isak's wise and healthy humanity that Hamsun's own final words of judgment fall upon all of the weak and wayward characters in the novel: first, upon the only momentarily wayward Inger; and then upon the others—upon Brede Olson, the misfit settler at Breidablik; upon "the imperishable Oline," sneaking old busybody; and upon Eleseus and Barbro, two of the children of the original settlers who had become contaminated by life "in the town." Despite Oline's genius for making trouble among the country-folk, it is to be remembered that she

. . . was not overblessed with this world's goods. Practised in evil—ay, well used to edging her way by tricks and little meannesses from day to day; strong only as a scandalmonger, as one whose tongue was to be feared; ay so. . . . Her powers were not less than those of other politicians; she acted for herself and those belonging to her, set her speech according to the moment, and gained her end, earning a cheese or a handful of wool each time; she also could live and die in commonplace insincerity and readiness of wit. . . .

Barbro, in her way, is scarcely less despicable than Oline; and yet Hamsun's final judgment on her is one tempered by a spirit of large and forgiving humanity—"Now and again she cries, and breaks her heart over this or that in her life—but that is only natural, it goes with the songs she sings, 'tis the poetry and friendly sweetness in her; she has fooled herself and many another with the same. . . ." And for Eleseus, Isak's misfit son, who ultimately emigrates to America and is never heard from afterward, Hamsun has words of unqualified pity—

Poor Eleseus, all set on end and frittered away. Better, maybe, if he'd worked on the land all the time, but now he's a man that has learned to write and use letters; no grip in him, no depth. For all that, no pitch-black devil of a man, not in love, not ambitious, hardly anything at all is Eleseus, not even a bad thing of any great dimensions.

Something unfortunate, ill-fated about this young man, as if something were rotting him from within. That engineer from the town, good man—better perhaps, if he had not discovered the lad in his youth and taken him up to make something out of him; the child had lost his roothold, and suffered thereby. All that he turns to now leads back to something wanting in him, something dark against the light. . . .

There are really only two characters in the novel for whom Hamsun has no sympathy: first, Fru Heyerdahl, the feminist, who busies herself much more with "advanced ideas" than with the obvious and immediate duties of parenthood; and secondly, Andresen, the petty merchant-adventurer, who in his small way gambles on an industrial development and fails miserably. They represent the canker of civilization in its most unhealthy, its least defensible forms; and as such they come in for Hamsun's most withering irony whenever they appear in the pages of the novel.

Some words about Hamsun's style in *Growth of the Soil*. Its mark is a direct, laconic simplicity; its tone is one of simple epic elevation. Hamsun attains here the heroic manner without ever resorting to the traditional literary means. At no point in the novel does he employ any of the rhetorical tricks which usually accompany the "epic manner." His style is short, clipped, markedly epigrammatic, without ever stooping to the merely banal or to the commonplace. It is idiomatic in the best sense of the word—in the sense that Hazlitt defines the idiomatic in his essay "On Familiar Style." Hamsun has on occasion indulged in a brutally exaggerated realism reminiscent of some of the prose of Strindberg—whom, by the way, he admires greatly. But there is none of this in *Growth of the Soil*. Nor is there in this novel anything of the posed, stilted, dress-shirt manner which Scandinavian authors, particularly lyric poets, so frequently affect. And yet Hamsun somehow achieves "the grand manner" in the sum total effect of *Growth of the Soil*. Impossible is it for the reader to forget the subtly dignified tone of epic elevation attained in the opening and closing scenes of *Growth of the Soil*, a tone gained largely by a marvelously appropriate simplicity of phrase; and scores of other passages in the novel are in their way equally effective.

The secret of this stylistic triumph is that Hamsun never loses sight of the particular world in which his story moves. It is a simple, natural, instinctive world—alone by itself, for the most part, in the great



*Almenning*. The people in this world are not complex, sophisticated, "civilized"; they go about their simple tasks, performing their daily round of duties, untroubled by those introspective moods that eat at the roots of will and character among more cultured classes. They know the phenomena of birth and growth and death as the everyday phenomena that they are—not artificially, as "objects of analysis." Hamsun keeps all of this constantly in mind, and he fits his style to this instinctive, primitive world of Sellanraa farm. The simple, direct, laconic idiom that he adopts as the primary pattern of his style in *Growth of the Soil* is one which exactly duplicates the thought patterns of the simple folk he is depicting; and, unlike other great novelists who have written of the peasant, Hamsun maintains the idiom with a marvelous consistency throughout his novel. In the straightforward matter-of-factness of this idiom—an idiom that deviates neither into extreme brutality of phrase nor into sentimental idyllicism of word choice—Hamsun has created an appropriateness of style in the so-called "peasant novel" which is perhaps unique in world literature.

That Hamsun's simple, straightforward prose has, however, a poetry of its own should be sufficiently apparent to any discerning reader of *Growth of the Soil*. It falls, of course, into that species of poetry to which Wordsworth has given the name "the poetry of common life." Hamsun, indeed, goes even a step further at times than did Wordsworth in actual practice; for he insists upon presenting certain imaginative responses of his peasant characters in the half-formed, fragmentary, only partially articulate lyric manner characteristic of actual peasant thought patterns and peasant speech. Sivert's experience by the river's side one evening, as he caught up the notes of the mating ducks, is a case in point—"A sound had floated through him, a sweetness, and kept him standing there with a delicate, thin recollection of something wild and splendid, something he had known before, and forgotten again." Here there is no effort to analyze, to probe, to get beyond the *actual quality* of Sivert's own half-articulate response—"a delicate, thin recollection of *something* wild and splendid, *something* he had known before, and forgotten again." The experience is one for Sivert to wonder at, to be thankful for, not to talk of or to theorize about. And Hamsun, the author, is no more concerned with theorizing about this experience than is Sivert himself. Hamsun simply *records* the experience, as it had formed itself with a fleeting, formless suddenness in Sivert's consciousness during that marvelous evening hour in the woods at the river's side.

Not always, however, is Hamsun's style in *Growth of the Soil* lyric in the delicate, mystery-filled sense that we find it in the passage when

Sivert experiences his sudden glimpse of other-worldly loveliness in consequence of his hearing the musical notes of two mating ducks. Isak and Inger and Sivert have only occasional moments of such rare, inexplicable spiritual content. For the most part their feet are planted firmly on the ground, their concerns, physical and mental, are immediate and of the earth earthy. It is therefore the heavy labors of man and the solid produce of the soil that Hamsun comes to sing most frequently in *Growth of the Soil*: Isak at work in the fields; Inger among her pots and pans or busy in the cow shed; the marvelous growth of corn at Sellanraa farm; and the vegetables, especially the lowly potato—to Hamsun no mean subject for poetry of a kind!

What was that about potatoes? Were they just a thing from foreign parts, like coffee; a luxury, an extra? Oh, the potato is a lordly fruit; drought or downpour, it grows and grows all the same. It laughs at the weather, and will stand anything; only deal kindly with it, and it yields fifteen-fold again. Not the blood of a grape, but the flesh of a chestnut, to be boiled or roasted, used in every way. A man may lack corn to make bread, but give him potatoes and he will not starve. Roast them in the embers, and there is supper; boil them in water, and there's a breakfast ready. As for meat, it's little is needed beside. Potatoes can be served with what you please; a dish of milk, a herring, is enough. The rich eat them with butter; poor folk manage with a tiny pinch of salt. Isak could make a feast of them on Sundays, with a mess of cream from Goldenhorn's milk. Poor despised potato—a blessed thing!

Here is a prose poem on a subject that would have warmed Wordsworth's heart. And yet I am not sure that Wordsworth would have approved of the *manner* in which the paragraph is conceived; for its robust aggressiveness of temper, at once roguish and serious, leaves little occasion for casting over the subject that "certain coloring of the imagination" which Wordsworth felt was essential even in poems dealing with lowly, concrete subjects. Hamsun is here, perhaps, more in the tradition of Whitman than of Wordsworth.

The potato, being useful, is a blessing unto man; and therefore it is an appropriate subject for poetry. Likewise is work—the ceaseless labor of man in loving cooperation with a reasonably fertile and kindly nature. Isak, brute of a worker that he is, becomes in consequence the most poetic of all of the conceptions that Hamsun introduces into his novel. Isak is no dreamer, no gambler—merely a man of stubbornly persistent herculean labors, wresting from the soil what the soil is ready to yield to one who instinctively understands her, loves her, works with her. It is Geissler who is the dreamer, his son the gambler; and both of them are failures, Geissler himself admits to Sivert in that significant passage toward the end of the novel which expounds most succinctly the burden of Hamsun's "message" in *Growth of the Soil*.

" . . . Look at you folk at Sellanraa, now; looking up at blue peaks every day of your lives; no new-fangled inventions about that, but fjeld and rocky peaks, rooted deep in the past—but you've them for companionship. There you are, living in touch with heaven and earth, one with them, one with all these wide, deep-rooted things. No need of a sword in your hands, you go through life bareheaded, barehanded, in the midst of a great kindliness. Look, Nature's there, for you and yours to have and enjoy. Man and Nature don't bombard each other, but agree; they don't compete, race one against the other, but go together. There's you Sellanraa folk, in all this, living there. Fjeld and forest, moors and meadow, and sky and stars—oh, 'tis not poor and sparingly counted out, but without measure. Listen to me, Sivert: you be content! You've everything to live on, everything to live for, everything to believe in; being born and bringing forth, you are the needful on the earth. 'Tis not all that are so, but you are so; needful on earth. 'Tis you that maintain life. Generation to generation, breeding ever anew; and when you die, the new stock goes on. That's the meaning of eternal life. What do you get out of it? An existence innocently and properly set towards all. What you get out of it? Nothing can put you under orders and lord it over you Sellanraa folk, you've peace and authority and this great kindliness all round. That's what you get for it. You lie at a mother's breast and suck, and play with a mother's warm hand. There's your father now, he's one of the two-and-thirty thousand. What's to be said of many another? I'm something, I'm the fog, as it were, here and there, floating around, sometimes coming like rain on dry ground. But the others? There's my son, the lightning that's nothing in itself, a flash of barrenness; he can act. My son, ay, he's the modern type, a man of our time; he believes honestly enough all the age has taught him, all the Jew and the Yankee have taught him; I shake my head at it all. But there's nothing mythical about me; 'tis only in the family, so to speak, that I'm like a fog. Sit there shaking my head. Tell the truth—I've not the power of doing things and not regretting it. If I had, I could be lightning myself. Now I'm a fog."

Poetry and substance, symbol and critical analysis—all of these fuse beautifully together in these words of Geissler, the type of vagabond dreamer who appears in one form or another with such remarkable persistency in nearly all of Hamsun's novels.

Geissler is severe in self-condemnation here; but his judgment falls even more mercilessly on his son, the modern "man of action," typical representative of a too-busy modern industrial civilization. The "fog," symbol of the dreamer, may on occasion water the thirsty surface of the earth sufficiently to provide at least for the moment against barrenness. But the "lightning," symbol of an over-hasty modern industrial activity, is but a "flash of barrenness"—Geissler's son is but the foolhardy gambler who is ultimately crushed by life itself because he "won't keep pace with life," driving on blindly, madly, with a hectic, nervous haste foreign to the quiet processes of nature which provide sound, healthy, proper growth. The modern man of action plays with the dice rather than labor with the plough; and his end is the end of all gamblers. Isak is not so. Isak is "one of the two-and-thirty thousand" who count

constructively in the marvelous processes of nature because he takes up life on life's own terms, instinctively divining the pace that nature sets, and adjusts his willing labors to the tempo and scale which a great and kindly nature intimates to him as he works upon her surface. And as he works he transforms some of nature's features, but he never defaces her, never makes her barren, as does the "lightning" at times—for nature is after all the Great Mother, who gives out a rich, abundant life if only man knows how to find his way to her and use her well.

Such is Hamsun's arresting message to an over-industrialized modern civilization. The message comes to us most strongly in the closing pages of the novel—and appropriately at the close, having, as it were, grown naturally and organically out of the impressively simple story of Isak and Inger and Sellanraa farm which has preceded. Hamsun was to write other novels in later years, some of them not without a strong note of decadence, even of partial cynicism; but in none of these later novels does he renounce that faith in man at work close to the soil which is the noble central burden of *Growth of the Soil*.



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# Scandinavian Legations

*The Ministers of Denmark, Norway, and  
Sweden Beautifully Housed in Washington*

BY ELISABETH ASCHEHOUG

THE THREE SCANDINAVIAN LEGATIONS in Washington suggest in their outer appearance the dignified, though inviting atmosphere of luxurious private mansions rather than the austere feeling often associated with official buildings. The furnishings are in the traditional English and French styles, but this does not detract from their harmony with other legations, for most of the foreign diplomatic residences in Washington are conservative in their appointments and furnishings. Only the Russians have dared to go distinctly modern.

Yet there is nothing stereotyped about the Scandinavian legations, for each building has its own distinctive character both in architectural style and in interior. A certain formality is of course to be expected. But since all the furniture, with the exception of a few pieces, is owned by the respective ministers, the rooms reflect the personal taste of their occupants, a fact which gives them the welcoming atmosphere of spacious homes.

Reminiscent of the homelands there are paintings or signed photographs of the various members of the different royal families, emphasizing national distinction. The tradition of the fine arts is introduced through famous paintings by leading artists. More intimate touches are to be found in exquisite examples of Scandinavian porcelain and silver or glass. Be they antique or modern, they suggest each nation's ancestral heritage as well as its contribution to the decorative arts.

In viewing the Danish, Norwegian, and Swedish legations as they stand today, let us take a backward glance and find how each one has achieved its present appearance. The Danish legation occupies the private residence built for Senator Scott of West Virginia. Later it was the home of Charles Gates Dawes as vice-president during President Coolidge's administration. Finally, it was leased six years ago by the Danish government from the Honorable Patrick J. Hurley, secretary of war under President Hoover. During the first few years of the Danish occupancy, the chancellery offices were in this building, but because of the increase of official business they have been moved, and



*The Vine-Covered Porch and Stairway Leading to the Garden in the Danish Legation*

now the whole house is used for residence. The writer visited it while it was occupied by the retiring Minister Otto Wadsted.

With its large columned porches along two sides facing the terraced garden, this grey stucco house suggests the generous proportions of a southern mansion. An unusual advantage of the Danish legation is its impressive location on one of the highest vantage points in Washington. The house hugs a curve of Belmont Road with the other façade overlooking the Capitol and the Washington monument in the distance. The park-like grounds cover two and a half acres beautifully planted with huge oaks, shrubs, and boxwood hedges on the sloping hillside. During the long summers, the house is covered with luxuriantly growing ivy and the arched porches seem to become part of the garden. This is, of course, a delightful feature when entertaining guests either at afternoon parties or in the evenings after dinner.

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The layout of the first floor reminded the visitor of a Colonial house, for the huge drawing room has windows on three sides. Since the furniture was in the French style, the walls were soft grey to form a suitable background for pastel damask and brocades. A neutral grey carpet set off the graceful curves of the dainty gilt or painted Louis XV chairs and sofas. In spite of the large size of the drawing room and the formal elegance of its furnishings, a delightful sense of intimacy prevailed in the arrangement of inviting groups around the fireplace and in the corners. At one end of the room beside the doors to the porch was a handsome gilt Louis XVI group covered in rose damask, and this had suggested the color of the taffeta draperies which were of an unusual rose shade specially made in Lyons. Above this group was a handsome portrait of Madame Wadsted. At the other end of the room a grand piano was balanced by a fine set of Louis XV furniture covered in tapestry with motifs from La Fontaine's fables intermingled with pastoral scenes.

Madame Wadsted's taste for daintiness and elegance did not only manifest itself in the furniture, for as a decided personal touch there



*A Setting of Antique Charm Is the Background for Formal Dinners at the Danish Legation. The Black Ebony Paneling and Beams Are Striking*



*A Sunny Informal Sitting Room in the Danish Legation. The Antique French Furniture in Pastel Shades Gives a Peculiar Charm*

was a vitrine containing a collection of antique fans and porcelain figurines. Several old paintings by Dutch masters adorned the walls, and fine porcelain vases made a Danish accent.

Adjoining the drawing room and facing the garden is a small sitting room where many photographs of friends and relatives lent an air of informality. Handsome commodes of inlaid rosewood formed effective contrasts with the French furniture in rose velvet against antique green frames. In most of the rooms were sparkling crystal chandeliers or wall brackets, and a pair of such flanked either side of an antique painting above the sofa.

The dining room is on the other side of this living room. With its period furniture in elaborately carved walnut, it struck a different key, for the gayety of pastel tones elsewhere had given way to dark hues and a feeling of stateliness. The walls are paneled to about eye level in ebony black wood and the matching beams in the ceiling contrast sharply with white plaster panels. A classical fireplace in the same wood with white marble facing lends importance to one end of the





*A Corner of the Drawing Room in the Danish Legation. The Gobelin Tapestry Covering the Furniture Pictures the Fables of La Fontaine*

room. The other is taken up by French doors leading to the porch which extends across all the three rooms facing the garden. Above the paneling the walls are painted a deep red which sets off the lighter tone of the red damask covering on the chairs. The furniture was in light walnut. A huge oriental rug combined these colors and at the same time accented the size of the room. At night, with candles in glittering crystal fixtures, the interior formed a dignified setting for formal dinners.

On the second floor are a series of large sunny bedrooms. Since the chancellery has been moved, there are also two informal sitting rooms. One of them was used mostly by Madame Wadsted and bore the imprint of her liking for French styles. The other constituted Minister Wadsted's "den" and home office with comfortable furnishings of old family pieces in the manner of Louis Philippe.

The Norwegian legation has been specially built as a home for the Norwegian minister in Washington. It has an ideal location on Massa-



*The Georgian Architecture of the Norwegian Legation Gives Character and Dignity to Its White Stone. The Façade Is on Massachusetts Avenue*

chusetts Avenue at the corner of Thirty-fourth Street. Several other diplomatic residences are close by; on the other side of Thirty-fourth Street is the new building for the Apostolic Delegate where the pope's representative resides. Not far from this is the British embassy. The Norwegian legation faces the wide, tree-lined Massachusetts Avenue and on its opposite side is the Naval Observatory Park. On other sides there are large private homes with spacious gardens, so the whole neighborhood has the character of an exclusive suburb.

The Norwegian legation was built in 1930-1931. That Norway has such a handsome building for its diplomatic representation is due to the efforts of former Minister H. H. Bachke. Furthermore his and Madame Bachke's experience and taste have contributed immeasurably not only to its distinguished appearance, but also to the practical plan which makes the building perfectly suited to its purpose.

The site of the legation has been increased to about three times its original size by the purchase of two adjoining lots. These valuable additions have been made possible through the generosity of several Norwegian-American friends of Minister Wilhelm Morgenstierne.

Minister Bachke's successor in Washington. Now there is no danger of other buildings being erected so close by that they might detract from the stately architecture, or cut off the view. The garden is undergoing a reconstruction to include the additional space and will all be laid out to harmonize with the style of the house itself.

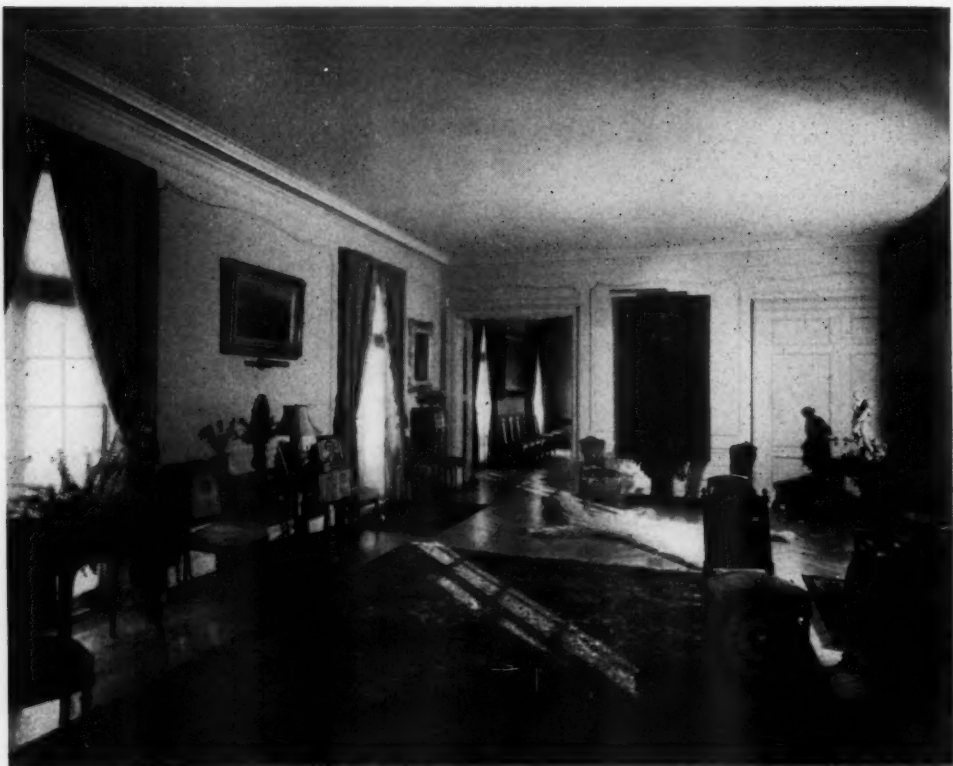
The architecture of the white stone building is in the Georgian style, and its restful classical lines and careful attention to architectural details lend it unusual beauty. On the ground floor is a spacious entrance hall with a handsome black and white marble floor and massive baroque furniture in keeping with the dignified setting. To the right of the hall is the chancellery with its many offices.

A graceful winding stairway leads up to the second floor where there is a series of rooms for official representation. There is space enough so that even a large number of guests may move freely about without any sense of crowding, while at the same time the interiors are furnished in such a manner that they have an inviting homelike atmosphere for everyday living.

In the hall on the second floor, daylight pours in through a large



*The Black and White Marble Floor and the Winding Staircase Are Features of the Cool and Spacious Entrance Hall in the Norwegian Legation*



*A Full Length Portrait of King Haakon Is the Focal Point in the Formal Drawing Room of the Norwegian Legation*

window and French doors facing a spacious porch. In the summer it makes an outdoor room with its awnings and comfortable rattan furniture and it is favored from breakfast time to the cool evenings. One feature which immediately attracts attention upon entering this hall is a full length portrait of Fridtjof Nansen. It is remarkable for its striking resemblance, and the background pictures a Norwegian landscape in a stylized manner. The portrait is painted by Axel Revold, Nansen's son-in-law, and is a gift to the legation from the insurance company Storebrand.

From the hall it seems natural first to enter the library to the left. The walls are paneled in waxed, knotty pine while the fireplace surrounded by deep easy-chairs and a sofa forms an attractive center. Above the mantel is a colorful painting of a fishing harbor in Maine painted by the Norwegian born artist Jonas Lie, president of the American National Academy of Design. It is a gift to the legation from Mr. Lie. Opposite the entrance door is a splendid portrait of Madame Morgenstierne wearing a brilliant red skiing costume. It is

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*The Intimate Library in the Norwegian Legation Where the Color Scheme Seems to Be Suggested by Jonas Lie's Painting Over the Mantel*

recently completed by the gifted young Norwegian artist, Björn Egeli from Telemark, who is making a name for himself as a portrait painter in Washington.

The library is furnished in the English eighteenth century style with some pieces of earlier periods. Among these is an unusually beautiful carved cabinet from 1653. The color scheme is mainly in green and mulberry with flowered linen draperies, all forming a pleasing complement to the mellow tone of the walls. Several etchings and drawings of well known Norwegians, friends of Minister Morgenstierne's, suggest associations with his homeland.

From the library large doors lead to the impressive drawing room. With its four windows, three of them facing Massachusetts Avenue, there is an abundance of sunlight which is softened by apple green draperies. These bring out the colorings in the main furniture which is antique and covered in Gobelin in Louis XVI style, a heritage from Minister Morgenstierne's parental home in Norway. The walls are

painted pale grey which is an excellent background also for an elegant baroque group in one of the corners. A grand piano and fine oriental rugs against light parquet floors increase the feeling of elegance. There is an impressive, full length picture of His Majesty King Haakon, painted by Brynjulf Strandenes, a gift from the artist to the legation.

Adjoining the drawing room is the large well-proportioned dining room. The same feeling of elegance prevails, but in a different manner, for this light interior with its white walls contrasting with mahogany furniture also has a feeling of austerity. The furniture is in the Sheraton style and was made some years ago in Trondheim to the order of Minister Bachke.

The Swedish legation on Sheridan Circle suggests the dignity of an old Renaissance mansion. It has equally distinguished surroundings, for it is in the center of the residences of the foreign diplomatic corps in Washington. Tall trees on the square in front of the house give it a park-like environment.



*The Impressive Renaissance Façade of the Swedish Legation with the New Chancellery Wing to the Right*



*In the Formal Drawing Room of the Swedish Legation the White Walls and Blue Draperies Are a Cool Background for French Furniture*

The house was originally built as a private residence for Senator Phelan of California. After Minister Boström's predecessor, Minister Wallenberg, had occupied the building for some years, it was purchased by the Swedish government in 1925 as a permanent home for the legation. For a number of years the chancellery offices occupied part of the ground floor, but due to the constant expansion of official affairs, Minister Wolmar Boström, who came to Washington in 1926, added a wing to the building for new and larger chancellery offices. This addition was completed in 1937 and the change has not only added to the impressive frontage of the property, but it has made possible an attractive living room in the modern Swedish manner where the former offices were.

In the spacious hall on the ground floor the Renaissance feeling of the house is carried out in the carved panels and in the details of the elaborate staircase. Carved baroque furniture against light walls with purple and deep green accents heighten the atmosphere of stateliness.



*Modern Swedish Style Is Used in This New Living Room at the Legation. The Lines Are Simple, but the Colors Are Gay*

To the right is an ante-room as a private office for Minister Boström. It is furnished in the modern Swedish style in harmony with the adjoining modern living room. There is a restful simplicity both in design and in arrangement. One corner is taken up by built-in sofas and bookcases, while antique etchings emphasize the informal atmosphere. The furniture is in dark-flamed birch in the marvelous high finish which the Swedes know so well how to produce. The textiles are also Swedish and their lovely soft textures give a homelike feeling to the "tailored" setting.

On the second floor are a series of other rooms for entertaining a large number of guests. Decorating the wall on the spacious landing is an impressive life-size portrait of His Majesty King Gustaf. It is painted by the famous artist Bernhard Österman and is one of the most recent gifts to the legation, for it was brought over last summer by the Delaware delegation.

The magnificent dining room on the left has recaptured the dignity of the Tudor era with its oak paneling and handsome coved ceiling with plaster ornamentation. Harmonious with this setting is the elaborate baroque furniture which belongs to the legation. Red velvet hangings and chair cushions blend with the deep tones of a huge oriental rug and lend a feeling of warmth to the interior. As a most harmonious decora-



tion on the walls are miniature paintings of all the Vasa kings. These are copies of the old paintings in Gripsholm castle and are lent to the legation by the National Gallery in Stockholm.

The library, which faces Sheridan Circle, has a delightful feeling of intimacy in contrast to the appropriate formality of the dining room. The walls are covered with velvet in the color of antique bronze which is very restful to the eye. Furnished in mahogany with deep upholstered pieces and many books, it is an ideal room in which to relax. The wall color is a good foil for the many paintings. There is an excellent portrait of Minister Boström and other portraits of both Madame and Minister Boström's family.

Adjoining the library is the large formal drawing room. Its oyster white walls with white silk damask panels are contrasted by French blue draperies which give it a cool atmosphere in keeping with its elegance. The furniture is a blend of Louis XV and Louis XVI styles accented by dark, handsomely inlaid commodes and tables. Although formality is the keynote, the furniture is arranged to invite small groups for conversation. One of the striking features of the drawing



*The Handsome Tudor Oak-Paneled Dining Room of the Swedish Legation. Miniatures of the Vasa Kings Hang Over the Mantel*

room is the collection of fine porcelains which include not only antique Swedish and oriental Lowestoft pieces but also choice modern specimens. Another detail appropriate to the eighteenth century setting is a small "silver table" with many exquisite pieces of fine silversmiths' work. Over the white marble fireplace is a striking portrait of Madame Boström and its pastel tones blend harmoniously with the delicate color scheme. On another wall is a picture by Prince Eugen portraying the Bay of Haga, and some old Dutch masters.

With the view over the tree tops on Sheridan Circle and the sunlight streaming in through the windows, there is a freshness and repose which makes the mind go back to some of the stately mansions of Sweden.

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## A Man's Last Word to a Woman

BY VERNER VON HEIDENSTAM

*Translated from the Swedish by CHARLES WHARTON STORK*

LOVE-DAZED on rosy paths I sought thee far;  
 That was the spring, my gay and stormy prime.  
 Then I encountered thee with smiles and war;  
 Those were the manhood years of summer-time.  
 I thank thee for the joy thy presence gave;  
 'Tis autumn, when our bed must be—the grave.



*The Folk High School at Reykholt, the Old Home of Snorri Sturlason, an Example of Modern Architecture*

## Culture in a Changing Iceland

BY RAGNAR OLAFSSON

THE ICELANDIC TWILIGHT has lasted for two hours. Darkness has fallen. At the door of the low, sod-roofed farmhouse the shepherd stamps the snow from his weary feet. A joyous clatter resounds from the kitchen. The maids have finished milking the cows and are now preparing the evening meal. Soon the entire household, master and mistress, menservants and maidservants, boys and girls, gather together in the *bathstofa*, or living room. After supper the women begin to spin and weave, the men to make or mend implements. Then the master or the mistress, or maybe one of the servants, takes up a volume of the sagas, or perhaps a recent work in poetry or prose, and sitting down beside the tallow candle, reads aloud to the busy company.

Time out of mind the Icelandic farm folk have spent their evenings thus. And so it has come about that the common people, generation

after generation, have kept alive the spirit of their literature, the language of their forefathers, and the traditions of their country. Today this scene is no longer typical. The households are smaller, often only husband and wife with their children. Clothes and implements which used to be made at home are now bought ready-made, and the radio supplies diversion in the evening.

The disappearance of this scene is only one sign of the thorough-going change that is taking place in Iceland today. The old culture and traditions are fading away before the dawn of a new civilization. Modern technics in industry and agriculture have introduced greater material comfort and increased leisure, while wider trade connections have brought with them stimulating intellectual currents from abroad. All this, together with the rapid growth of the towns at the expense of the rural population, is resulting in a new culture predominantly urban in character.

Knowledge of reading and writing has never been the privilege of the few in Iceland. In the old days there was always someone in the household able to teach the young to read and write, and the fascinating stories to which they listened from childhood made them eager to learn. Now all boys and girls, unless they are sent to private school or tutored at home, must go to the free elementary schools, which are supported partly by the State and partly by the municipalities. They start at the age of seven and continue till they are fourteen. Then they may either go to work, learn a trade, or enter the intermediate school offering courses in mathematics, science, history, and modern languages.



*The New Main Building of the University*





*The Folk High School at Laugarvatn, a Modern Attempt to Imitate the Old Many-Gabled Farmhouse*

Students who plan to go on to the University must now spend four years in the *gymnasium*. All schools in Iceland, including the University, are co-educational, and the fees, if any, are very low.

The University of Iceland consists of four faculties: arts, law, medicine, and theology, besides an institute for research in agriculture and fishing. The University, which is in Reykjavík, has carried on most of its class work in the parliament building. Now, however, an extensive building program is under way. On a site donated by the municipality, just outside the city, three buildings have already been erected, a student dormitory, the Research Institute, both already in use, and a large building to house the four faculties and the library. This main building will be ready for occupation next year.

The strongest department in the faculty of arts is that of Icelandic language and literature. One of the most distinguished scholars in this department, Sigurthur Nordal, was visiting professor at Harvard some years ago. The foreign language work is done mainly by visiting instructors from England, France, Germany, and Scandinavia.

Icelandic students in engineering and other subjects not offered by the University are forced to go abroad, but the government makes an annual grant for this purpose, and the University awards a number of travelling fellowships to its graduates every year.

To become an elementary school teacher in Iceland, it is necessary to attend a special training school in Reykjavík for four years. Although there are many women teachers, the majority are men who make teaching their life work. Their salaries are not large, but in many places they have free house and, if the school is in the country, a few acres of land. The teachers share the life of the common people and are fitted by training to take a leading part in shaping the thought of the community and in expressing the needs and desires of the people.

Special schools prepare students for business, agriculture, the fishing industry, and various trades. Domestic science schools teach girls how to keep house. Folk high schools, modelled on the Danish, attract mainly the farmers' sons and daughters. The folk high school movement is comparatively new in Iceland, but in recent years several well-equipped, modern buildings have been erected, usually close to hot springs, so that they can be heated from them. In summer these buildings are transformed into tourist hotels.

To encourage reading, libraries have been established in all parts of the country. There are also many reading clubs, which purchase books to circulate among their members. An indication of how popular reading is among the common people is the fact that some of the libraries make up special cases of books for the fishermen to take with them on their trawlers. Many private homes, too, have fairly large collections of books, and every cottage has a few—at least the Bible and some of the sagas.

Literature has always been the most favored art in Iceland and a vital part of the life of the people. The golden age of Icelandic literature was the thirteenth century. The Eddas and most of the sagas were written before 1300. Aside from their literary merits, these works constitute the chief source of information on the ancient Teutonic religion and traditions. This literature has never ceased to be read by the people, and so little has the language changed that the prose written two hundred years before Chaucer and four hundred years before Shakespeare can still be read without difficulty by any child who has learned to read modern Icelandic. Since the days of the sagas many winds have blown, but every century has added something of value to the literary heritage.

Among the fishermen and other workers, fiction is by far the most popular reading. In the cases of books supplied to fishing crews, for

instance, all the new novels, both Icelandic and translations, published during the year are included, together with light novels in Danish and English. A few volumes of modern poetry and scientific works of special interest to fishermen are added.

For years Einar Kvaran's novels of Reykjavík during the early part of this century and during the World War have been the favorite reading of this group. Recently, however, they have been outstripped in popularity by the works of the young and talented Halldór Laxness. Although he writes exclusively in Icelandic, Laxness is our most cosmopolitan novelist. He has travelled extensively in Europe, the Americas, and Russia, and knows intimately every nook and corner of his own country. In pungent, fluid prose he describes with uncompromising realism the passions and struggles of the poorest of the poor under the changing conditions of modern Iceland. Because he portrays the darker side of life in Iceland, Laxness is intensely disliked by those who feel that readers abroad will form from his books an unfavorable view of the country as a whole. But the power of his pen is undisputed, and his works have had a profound influence on the style and language of the younger writers.

In Reykjavík there are several museums open to the public free of charge. The most popular is the Museum of Natural History, which contains a good collection of Icelandic birds and animals and some interesting exotic material. Especially attractive to foreign visitors is the Museum of National History with its comprehensive collection of Icelandic antiquities. The interest of the common people in their museums is seen by the specimens sent in voluntarily from all parts of the country.

In the old days the hard life of the Icelandic farmers did not leave much time or energy for sports. The *glíma*, a kind of wrestling game peculiar to Iceland, has been cultivated for centuries and is still kept up. But with increased leisure other forms of sport such as soccer, swimming, skating, and skiing have largely supplanted it. The young people of Iceland are enjoying more outdoor life now than ever before in history. When you see a gay group of boys and girls crowding into the buses on a Saturday evening or Sunday morning in Reykjavík, you can always be sure of their destination. They are off to the mountains—in winter for skiing, and in summer for camping and hiking. These wholesome, healthy-looking young people give promise of a bright future for their country.

In old rural Iceland the theater was practically unknown. The only approach to dramatic expression was the *vikivaki*, folk dances performed to the singing of ballads. The whole adult population of a dis-



*Winter Skiing in the Mountains*

trict would gather together on a clear winter evening, the moonlight glittering on the frozen snowfields, and the joyous crowd would sing and dance *vikivaki* throughout the night.

As soon as a foundation of town life had been laid in Reykjavík about 1800, the amateur theater made its appearance and the first Icelandic plays were written. Now there are amateur groups all over the country, and most of the newer community houses have little theaters. In Reykjavík there is an amateur company which puts on at least two performances every week during the winter. The actors come mostly from well-to-do middle class families, and practically all of them work during the day. Some of the most gifted belong to families which have already developed an acting tradition. The standard of acting and directing compares favorably with that of the better amateur groups elsewhere. The theater-going public is mainly from intellectual, professional, and business circles. But the interest of the common people in the drama is seen in casual performances by workers' groups.



A National Theater is now being built in Reykjavík, which will be equipped with the latest technical devices of the modern theater, including special lighting effects and a revolving stage. The funds for building this theater have been collected by a government tax on amusement. At present the movies are more popular than the theater, with Hollywood pictures in the lead. But there are no indications that motion pictures will take the place of the theater. On the contrary, they seem to stimulate interest in the stage.

The plays performed by the amateur theater in Reykjavík are sometimes native works on subjects from contemporary Iceland or from folk tales. Two of Jóhann Sigurjónsson's plays have been published in translation by the American-Scandinavian Foundation. One of these, *Eyvind of the Hills*, was put on at Harvard some years ago. On the whole, Icelandic literature is not rich in drama, and many of the plays produced are translations of classic or modern works from English and European authors, including Shakespeare, Molière, Holberg, Ibsen, and Shaw.

The smaller groups attempt less ambitious plays. On New Year's Day, 1938, I happened to be staying in a small fishing village on the northernmost point of Iceland. The main attraction of the day was the performance of a light comedy by the local players. The director



*Salmon Fishing, a Popular Sport*



*In the Center the New National Theater in a Style Suggesting the Basalt Rocks of Iceland, to the Left the Library in the Older Danish Style*

was one of the villagers who had lived for a time in a larger town and had there been active in an amateur group. Several of the players had never been on the stage before. They were young fishermen and fishermen's daughters, the daughter of the manager of the local cooperative society, the son of the local doctor, and others. It was evident that they had not much money to spend on costumes and settings, but what they had was skilfully used and the general effect of the acting was good.

The Icelanders have been fond of singing ever since the days of the early settlers. Music was stimulated by the church and some excellent folk melodies built on the old church modes have been preserved. To-day choral singing is cultivated both in town and country, and two Reykjavík choirs *Fóstbræður* and *Karlahór Reykjavíkur* have had several successful tours in Europe. Since there is no opera at home, some of the best Icelandic singers have joined opera companies abroad.

An American visitor on board the little Icelandic freighter *Hekla* in the harbor of New York last fall was surprised to be entertained by the playing of beautiful records by Icelandic opera singers.

Instrumental music has been slow to develop in Iceland. Only two primitive native instruments are known, one of them a kind of fiddle, the other the three-stringed *langspil*. Nowadays harmoniums are common in the country and pianos in the towns. In the better families it is considered a necessary qualification for marriage that the daughters of the house should learn to perform on one of these instruments. The more musical people are also acquainted with the guitar and the violin. Reykjavík has a conservatory of music and a symphony orchestra. Occasionally the students of the conservatory and the orchestra present operettas. There are several composers of note, among them the Cathedral organist, Sigfús Einarsson, known abroad for his modern arrangements of old Icelandic folk melodies.

The graphic arts evolved late in Iceland. Wood carving and tapestry weaving have been practised from olden times, and many of the examples which have been preserved show considerable artistic talent. But it was not till the beginning of this century that Iceland's first and still greatest sculptor Einar Jónsson appeared on the scene. He is



*The Parliament Building, an Example of Stone Construction*

represented in this country by a statue in Philadelphia of Thorfinnur Karlsefni, the Icelfander who was the first white man to try to settle in America. Others of his statues adorn the city of Reykjavík. Some years ago the Icelandic government built a museum where the public can enjoy his works and where the sculptor himself can live and labor at his art without pecuniary worries. Mr. Jónsson is a good craftsman, but he is first of all a poet who expresses his visions in stone.

Several other Icelanders have made a reputation as sculptors, among them Miss Nína Sæmundsson, who executed the decoration above the entrance to the Waldorf-Astoria in New York.

The beautiful initials in many of the old Icelandic manuscripts are the first examples of drawing or painting in Iceland. Except for a few sporadic portraits, however, there was no real painting before the late nineteenth century.

During the last thirty years a brilliant group of young landscape painters has arisen. Although they have all studied abroad and have been influenced by French art from impressionism onward, they have nevertheless produced a definitely Icelandic school of painting characterized by strong color effects inspired by the native mountain scenery.

The Icelandic public, unfamiliar as it was with sculpture and painting, has shown a commendable interest and acquired a distinctive taste. Even people in moderate circumstances make a habit of buying paintings and sometimes small pieces of sculpture.

The dearth of durable building materials prevented architecture from playing an important rôle in Iceland until recently. Of course the different districts had characteristic types of farmhouses. But the few official buildings which were constructed of lasting materials and are still preserved are in the Danish manorial style. It was not till the close of the last century that Icelanders began to feel the need of employing trained architects. Concrete was then introduced as building material and the erection of permanent structures became general.

The State architect, Mr. Guthjón Samúelsson, who is responsible for the architecture of most of the State-owned public buildings erected during the last twenty years, as well as a number of other important buildings, has tried to reproduce in them the general effect of the basalt rocks of Iceland.

The Icelandic public is small. Even the most popular artist or writer has difficulty in earning a living by the sale of his works. But the Icelandic Parliament realizes that it is not enough to care for the material wants of the people. It has therefore appointed a permanent Commission for the promotion of culture, and votes an annual sum to this





*A Swimming Basin in Reykjavik, the Water Tempered by the Warm Springs*

Commission for the purchase of works of art, for the publication of books, and for the awarding of special grants to artists and writers.

In the past Iceland's main contacts with the outside world have been through Scandinavia. Hence the dominant intellectual influences have been Continental. Geographically, Iceland is closer to the British Isles and North America than to the continent of Europe, and since she has been free to formulate her own trade policy, Iceland's connections with Great Britain have greatly increased. As a result English is now better known in Iceland than any other foreign language. We may therefore expect that cultural currents from the English-speaking world will be felt even more strongly in the future.

The Icelanders do not look without regret upon the disappearance of the old culture and the old customs. But they are confident that the national spirit will survive in new forms. When the day's work is over, they can turn on the radio and hear programs of music, plays, or sagas from the broadcasting station near Reykjavik, or they can listen to foreign programs from Europe and even from America. They can go to the movies or the theater, to lectures or parties, and even in the country districts these forms of amusement are not inaccessible. They have more material comfort and broader horizons than their forefathers in the *bathstofa*, listening to the reader by the tallow candle. Whether they are any happier we do not know, but whatever changes are before us, the old Iceland can never come back.



*Hans Jacob Nilsen as Hjalmar Ekdal in "The Wild Duck"*

## The Norwegian Stage: New Forces

BY EINAR SKAVLAN

NORWEGIAN THEATRICAL life has passed through a great transition in the last few years. The change is not apparent from day to day, but it strikes us vividly when we look back over a few seasons. It is now two years since the writer contributed a survey of Norwegian drama to the REVIEW. Since that time the "great generation," which was at the height of its powers at the turn of the century, has almost disappeared from our theaters, especially from the National Theater in Oslo, which was dominated by this group for thirty years. The younger generation of actors has now advanced to the front ranks.

In the forefront of the older artists stood Johanne Dybwad, a genius both as

actress and as stage director. Last season she could celebrate her seventieth birthday and her fiftieth anniversary on the stage. Her mind is as vigorous as ever, but last autumn she suffered an accident which disabled her right arm with the result that she had to refrain from work. One of her contemporaries, Harald Stormoen, died last season. Others have reached the retiring age, among them Egil Eide, Ragna Wettergren, and Hauk Aabel. Three of the old vigorous stock are left: Halfdan Christensen, August Oddvar, and Ingolf Schanche, but they no longer set their stamp on the repertoire as they once did. New forces have arisen.

True, the National Theater began the season last autumn with a play that

brought back old times with a feeling almost ghostlike. It was Ibsen's *The Pretenders*, and the theater had entrusted the production to its first director, Björn Björnson, now seventy-nine years old. He acquitted himself of the task with remarkable energy and authority, but it was, of course, a production in the style of the past: a rather realistic picture of a chapter in the history of Norway five hundred years ago as Ibsen saw it in the light of his own artistic conception. August Oddvar impersonated a brooding, impassioned, unhappy Earl Skule. Ingolf Schanche had created an original, intensely sinister Bishop Nicholas. Between them stood Stein Grieg Halvorsen, a much younger actor, as the fortunate hero of the play, the young and confident King Håkon. The production was viewed respectfully, but did not grip the emotions. Perhaps the events then being enacted upon the stage of the world were too insistent, and prevented the beholder from being impressed by historical pictures from half a millennium ago.

But if Henrik Ibsen's historical dramas no longer seem vital, we must not therefore suppose that his significance to the Norwegian theater is a thing of the past. His great realistic plays

still wield their old power. In the past season the National Stage in Bergen put on *The Wild Duck* with the manager of the theater, Hans Jacob Nilsen, as Hjalmar Ekdal. And among the new plays, the one that has made the most profound impression upon us this year, Finn Halvorsen's *Abraham's Sacrifice*, is suggestive of Ibsen in its character portrayal, its view of life, and its dramatic technique. With its keen and timely social satire and its clever characterization, it is a personal and human drama dealing with the problems of our time, but written in the spirit of Ibsen.

*Abraham's Sacrifice* tells us about a boy of sixteen, an adolescent, almost a child. This fact makes us remember Ibsen, for who could portray children as he did? We need only think of Hedvig in *The Wild Duck* and of Little Eyolf. There are

a great many grown people who forget how they thought and felt when they were children—differently from grown people or at least from what grown people admit that they think and feel. Lauritz in *Abraham's Sacrifice* frankly says that he cannot understand why it should have been such a mortal sin that he cheated in examinations. It was only too bad that he was



Knut Wigert and Tore Segelcke in  
"Abraham's Sacrifice"



Olafr Havrevold as "the Weary One" in "While We Wait"

found out; for otherwise everybody would have been pleased and happy. He says this to his mother, and she understands him, because she remembers how children feel, but to his father, the clergyman, he does not dare to say any such thing; for Pastor Tonning lives only in the world of the grown-ups, and he has forgotten that he ever lived in the child's paradise of cynical innocence.

The head master of the school is equally strict and equally virtuous. Both are horrified at the crime of cheating, but they make no attempt to find the human impulse behind it. The chief motive is that Lauritz is deathly afraid of his father—he simply does not dare to fail in his examination and he is so frightened that he forgets even what he knows. Is Pastor Tonning then a harsh and cruel father? Not at all. He wants to be sympathetic and humane, but only as long as it does not cost him anything. Unfortunately the cheating occurs at a time when the pastor is smarting under a severe personal humiliation. He has written a liberal news-

paper article against the gruesome stories in the Old Testament, which he thinks should be eliminated from the school books. As a result of this article he fails to get a living in the capital which he had made application for, and has to remain in a small town. In his disappointment he loses his balance; he is willing to sacrifice his helpless son in order to appease the pietists who look upon the article as a revolt against God on the part of the pastor. So he consents to take Lauritz out of school and send him to sea as a punishment, although the boy has a horror of the sea.

In his fear of the sea and his fear of his father, his desperation heightened by an inherited nervous disposition, Lauritz goes quite out of his mind and kills his father in self-defense. Finn Halvorsen wanted to portray the boy in such a way that we should not turn from him in horror, but understand him; and the young actor Knut Wigert, who in this play had his first important rôle at the National Theater, entered into the part with refreshing youthfulness and genuineness. Kolbjörn Buøen, who comes from the National Stage in Bergen, took the part of the uncle. He too had as a child been repressed by his father, and he too had loved his mother, although she had not dared to defend him. When he sees how Lauritz suffers, the warm courage of his youth surges up in the middle-aged man, and it is due to him, the black sheep of the family, the despised fiddler at a café, that the problems are solved. He has the spirit of self-sacrifice which the pastor and the head master lack. Buøen's playing is subtle and appealing. Tore Segelcke as the mother and Olafr Havrevold as the father were convincing and fascinating in their impersonations. The play was excellently staged by Gerda Ring.

The problem of the relation between parents and children is very timely, and Halvorsen's play was produced almost simultaneously in three theaters; at the



National Theater in Oslo, at the Trøndelag Theater in Trondheim under the energetic manager Henry Gleditsch, and at the National Stage in Bergen, where the manager is Hans Jacob Nilsen, considered the ablest producer in the Norwegian theatrical world.

Side by side with Finn Halvorsen, stands Johan Borgen as one of the dramatists who have most strongly stamped the repertoire of the National Theater. He is actually of the same generation, thirty-six years old and only nine years younger than Halvorsen, but in reality there is an abyss between them, for Borgen belongs to those who have grown up since the World War. His play *While We Wait* also deals with the subject of fear, but it is a very different kind of fear from that which appears in the harmonious antebellum work of Finn Halvorsen or in that of Ibsen. In their day fear was directed

at something definite—something which, if it could be removed, would leave human beings happy. To the people in Johan Borgen's play fear is a part of themselves—a natural state. They are not afraid of any one thing; they are afraid of death, afraid of life, afraid of their own thoughts, afraid of the past which threatens the future. When the leading character, called "the Weary One," has come to the point where the strain must break, he cannot kill his enemy in order to save himself; he can only kill fear by taking his own life.

Before the War we thought the world was advancing and everything was getting better and better. But since the War we have experienced exactly the reverse: there is retrogression everywhere; things are getting worse and worse; people are becoming more and more inhuman. The horrors we hear about paralyze us. We cannot take up arms against them, we can only think with apprehension of the time when they will reach us. The fear of a thing may be worse than the thing itself—as all sleepless people know. "The Weary One"—which is the only name Borgen has given the leading character in his play—is such a sleepless person in a world full of dread. A typical mood of the age has been reproduced in *While We Wait*.

The action of the play is slight. A few people who happen to be waiting in a railway station for a belated train pass the time by helping a theatrical troupe to rehearse. In doing so they become absorbed by the characters and unconsciously reveal their own lives, their moods and passions. In its form the piece is light and playful, a pyrotechnic display of wit and repartee. And in this respect too it is typical of the age, for however horrible we may think our time, we cannot deny that it is thrilling, absorbing, fascinating as hardly any other age in history. Agnes Mowinkel had staged the play with intimate understanding and passionate feel-



Gerd Egede Nissen as Anna  
Sophie Hedvig

ing. Olafr Havrevold interpreted "the Weary One" as a man so full of the dread of life itself that nothing that happens can frighten him. He is a charmer and a poseur, full of merry conceits in the first act and rising to great emotional outbursts toward the end of the play. In the spirit of the piece were also Kolbjörn Buøen as "the Gentleman" and Tore Segelcke as "the Actress."

There is something in the mood of Borgen's play that reminds us of Robert Sherwood's *Idiot's Delight*, and as it happens the American play has been produced this very season at the Central Theater in Oslo with the young Per Aabel as the impresario—an elegant and witty modern type. Per Aabel, who is a son of the old popular comedian Hauk Aabel of the National Theater, has shown himself as an imaginative character actor in classic repertoire when he played Jean de France in Holberg's comedy of that name.

Another American offering in Norwegian theatrical life

was Clare Booth's comedy *The Women* played simultaneously at the New Theater in Oslo—where it was the chief box office success of the season—at the Trøndelag Theater in Trondheim, and at the National Stage in Bergen. An American play of greater literary value was Clifford Odets's *Golden Boy* at the Norwegian Theater in Oslo, where it was played in *landsmål*. The production, in excellent modern style, was staged by the manager, Knut Hergel, one of the coming men in the Norwegian theatrical world.

The best stage production of the season in any Norwegian theater was at the National Stage in Bergen where the great Czech writer Karel Capek's *Insects' Play* was put on under the direction of the manager, Hans Jacob Nilsen. It is a caustic satire of war mentality, with a sinister application to the world events of the present time. The production conformed to an international pattern and was quite similar to that of Nancy Price in London, but with a personal interpreta-



"*Insects' Play*" by Karel Capek at the National Stage in Bergen

tion. It seemed to bring a breath from the great European stages. An especially robust comic figure was that of Ella Hval as the dung-beetle.

A survey of the theatrical season in Norway would be incomplete if it did not mention the two leading actresses of the National Theater, Gerd Egede Nissen and Tore Segelcke, in their two most important rôles of the winter. Last February the theater celebrated the fiftieth birthday of the witty and sprightly dramatist Helge Krog by taking up again his psychological love drama *Konkylien* (*The Sea Shell*), in which Tore Segelcke again played Sonja, a typical young Norwegian woman of the time after the War, strong and independent—a rôle which, next to her Nora, is one of her best.

Gerd Egede Nissen has interpreted with tender expressiveness the name part in *Anna Sophie Hedvig*, a very modern play by the Danish dramatist Kjeld Abell. It shows how the worship of power has brutalized the nations and forced quiet people, who treasure personal liberty above all else, to ask themselves whether it is not time for them also to defend by force the values which they believe in. Anna Sophie Hedvig is a teacher in a small provincial town. Circumstances compel her to take the life of another woman teacher who, she is convinced, will destroy the whole spirit of humanity and

kindliness on which the school and its educational system are based. The background is everyday provincial life pictured with humor and sympathy, but by a bold dramatic stroke, which reminds us of the Norwegians Nordahl Grieg and Johan Borgen, Kjeld Abell creates an emotional connection with world events, particularly the war in Spain. Gerd Egede Nissen brings enthusiasm and tender devotion to her interpretation of Anna Sophie Hedvig. It is somewhat in the same spirit as her appealing impersonation of Gabrielle in Nordahl Grieg's *The Defeat* based on the tragic struggle of the Paris Commune in 1871. Gabrielle was also a teacher, a martyr to liberty, and a humble but unbending messenger of civilization and humanity.

There is a cultural community of interest among the struggling young theaters of Denmark, Norway, and Sweden. More than ever before they are bound together in a free intellectual cooperation. The same plays are performed in all three countries, notably those of Nordahl Grieg, Kjeld Abell, and Pär Lagerkvist. Dramatists and actors of all three countries have been inspired much in the same manner by events in the world at large. Love of liberty is strong in the countries of the North, and it blossoms in their art now as so often before.

# Kaj Munk

BY HAKON STANGERUP

1

A LITTLE OVER A DECADE ago—to be accurate, on a grey October morning in 1928—a young clergyman awoke in a cheap hotel room in Copenhagen and found himself a failure. He had come all the way from the west coast of Jutland, from the little town of Vedesø, in order to be present at the première of his play, *An Idealist*, which the Royal Theater had accepted and produced. There was not a human being in Copenhagen who had known anything about this young clergyman. He had refused to be interviewed. Nor did he say a word when the newspaper men rang him up the day after the première and compassionately asked him how he felt after his thundering fiasco. He did not say anything, but the treatment he had received stuck in his mind. He went home to preach to his parish—and to go on writing. That is what he has done ever since, and he is today Denmark's most famous dramatist, the author of seven big dramas which have been played with extraordinary success, not only in Copenhagen but all through the Danish provinces, as well as in Sweden and Norway. Nor is it only as a dramatist that this parish pastor is now regarded as one of Denmark's greatest. As a lyricist and a debater of current issues, as a journalist and orator he is ranked among the first. His is the leading name in modern Danish intellectual life, the chief surety that this intellectual life has a future. And all this has been achieved in a decade, at the age of forty. The name Kaj Munk, which was first mentioned with a pitying shrug of the shoulder, is today not far from being our national pride.

2

Kaj Munk's production is first and foremost dominated by his dramas, which are now all available in book form with the exception of the weakest, *Love* (*Kærlighed*), which was played at the Royal Theater in 1934. The first in the series was *An Idealist* (1928), a play about King Herod of Judea. This was followed by a drama with a modern setting, *In the Breakers* (*I Brændingen*, 1929), the chief character of which has to some extent received its imprint from Georg Brandes and presents his fate in a symbolic interpretation. The next play, *Cant* (1931), was another historical drama, this time about Henry VIII. Then came *The Word* (*Ordet*, 1932), a modern drama from a Danish small town. The next year came another historical drama, this time about King David, *The Elect* (*De Udvalgte*, 1933). Then Munk suddenly leaped into a timely discussion of current situations. His two latest dramas, *The Victory* (*Sejren*, 1936) and *He Sits by the Melting-Pot* (*Han sidder ved Smeltediglen*, 1938), deal, the first with a dictator in Italy, who cannot well be anybody but Mussolini, and the latter with the pogroms in Germany, the instigator of which can only be Hitler.

In addition to these dramas, Kaj Munk has published a travel book from a trip to Palestine, a collection of hunting letters, and two volumes of poetry, one containing a group of poems from his Palestine trip, besides a collection of verse for children. Furthermore, he has published an Oxford book entitled *Ten Oxford Snapshots* (1936) in which, however, he does not say anything about whether he could imagine himself being "changed," and finally, as his latest book, a large collec-



tion of verse, articles, short stories, and sketches selected from his contributions to the daily press.

This production is impressive even by its volume. Everything is written almost

in a fury, the articles dashed down on the paper like lightning, the verses improvisations, the dramas conceived and worked out in a single inspiration. Even the first glance gives an impression of a deep glow, which is strengthened as we come closer to these many and varied books. One might say of Kaj Munk, as one of his great predecessors in Northern drama said about himself, that he wanted to be the hottest fire. But then we must not forget to underscore the all-important difference; that the fire which burns in Kaj Munk has

been lit in prayer to and veneration of another than himself, a Higher, as he himself says. For all Kaj Munk's work and his whole personality are inspired by his faith.

If we do not hold fast to this central fact as the decisive one in Kaj Munk's authorship, we shall never learn to know him thoroughly. As an artist he is so striking, as a dramatist so varied, as a journalist so

many-sided, that the unity of all these qualities can only be realized when we understand that they are integral parts of the pastor and the Christian. His articles end with God; his dramas always begin with Him. As a motto over his entire creative work there shines an invisible passage of Scripture, "For what is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" That is the invocation at Kaj Munk's theater, the motto over every one of his articles. So seriously is his authorship conceived, so inexorably

does it serve the one great and burning principle of faith. The leading characters in all his dramas are torn in deadly conflict between God and the world, and



*Kaj Munk in the Garden of His Parsonage at Vedeřsö in West Jutland*

the author passes a hard judgment upon them when they choose power and glory and riches. Kaj Munk is a great poet and a phenomenal artist, but he never worships art for art's sake. He *serves*, as he himself says, in his drama. The same is true of the articles and speeches and poems that fly like a rain of sparks from the lightning rod in Vedersö.

There is one thing about him which many have found it difficult to understand, namely that he is a happy man. The lightning has not singed him into asceticism. All the joys and excitements of life attract him and call upon his faculties. He loves the common day, its duties and rewards. Moreover, he holds to the opinion that a cheesemonger serves God better by being a happy Christian and an honest cheesemonger than by being a disappointed dragon of virtue who sells clammy cheeses. And by the same token he thinks and sets out to demonstrate that a Christian poet does not have to be a great Christian and a small poet, as one would think from most of the Christian poesy which our modern times have produced. To be great as a Christian is to have a burning faith. To be great as a poet and as a journalist means to be alive, direct, impassioned, sensational, vital, and witty. Kaj Munk combines both Christian and poet consistently, on the stage as in the newspaper article. Christianity and boredom have so long been linked in Danish literature that it seemed a genuine shock when Kaj Munk made his entry on the Danish Parnassus wearing alternately the masks of tragedy and comedy before his face, but speaking unalterably with the voice of faith.

## 3

If we examine the leading characters in Kaj Munk's dramas, the idea on which they are based will be clear. Let us look first at Herod in *An Idealist*. He is King of the Jews and he wants to remain King of the Jews. He is ready to use all means and to pay any price for this goal. He

juggles and threatens, entreats and commands, fights and cringes. He glides about like an eel and bites like a snake. All obstacles are removed from his path; his way toward victory is covered with corpses; blood runs in a thickening stream about the throne, which he has finally wrested from all his rivals. There is a tremendous strength in this man, a monumental and many-sided power. His personality is that of the leader, the ruler, the chieftain. He evokes admiration wherever he sets his foot. The author's enthusiasm for this powerful personality leaps from the drama like red tongues of flame—and yet he makes him suffer defeat, makes him tumble down as an imbecile wreck, down from the throne he had won. Why? Because all his endeavor and all his striving has been only for earthly goods and gold. He has given unto Caesar what was Caesar's, but never unto God what was God's. And when he believes that all his rivals, all pretenders to the throne, have been rooted out, the woman with the Child crosses his path, the Child who was to become the real King of the Jews.

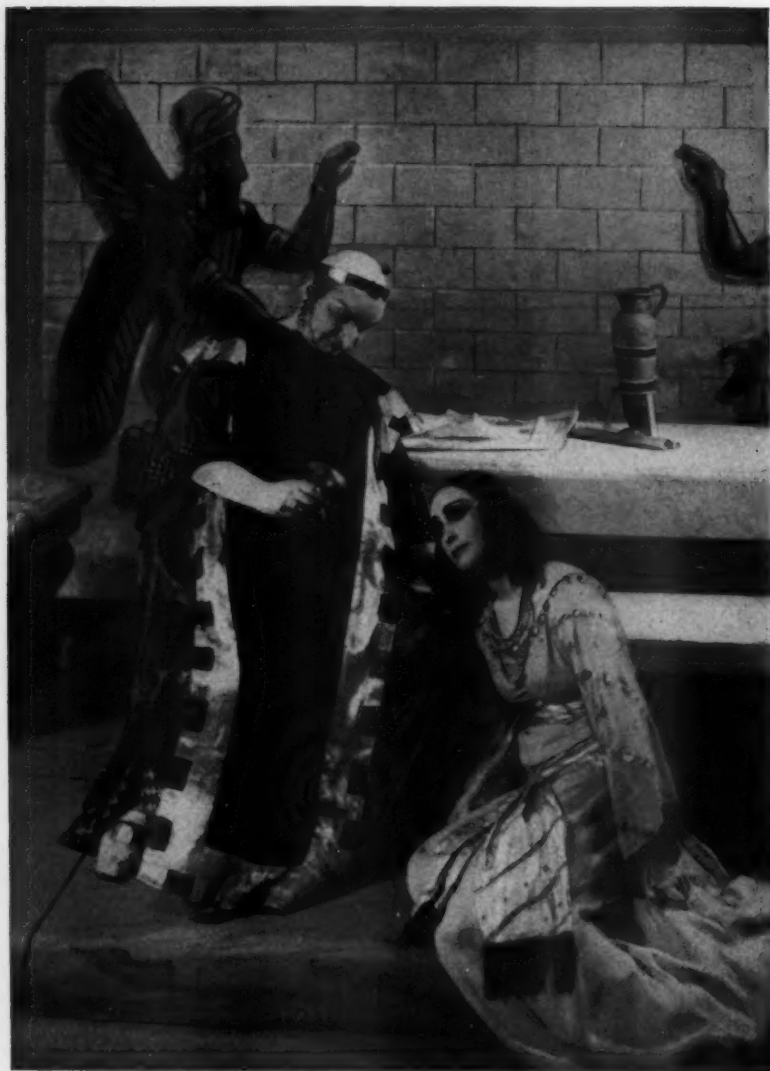
The same motive, that of the tremendous victory and the terrifying certainty that this victory is nothing, is enacted also in Munk's next big drama, *In the Breakers*. The leading character is Professor Krater, a brilliant scholar, a man of the world, a literary artist who has devoted all his faculties to fighting against religion and paying tribute to the transient beauty of this earthly life. This man is in part suggested by Georg Brandes. Against a slow, compact resistance he has struggled on until he has at last won complete recognition. The nation stands ready to pay him tribute on his anniversary. Newspapers all around the world praise his work. He has really attained his goal: the triumph of the human intellect as exemplified in himself. And then he suddenly discovers how poor and barren it all is, how happiness is non-existent, how the gold of the spirit and the silver of the



*Like an Earlier Jutland Writer, Steen Steensen Blicher, Kaj Munk  
Likes to Hunt Over the Heath*

intellect are changed to heavy, wearisome lead in his hands. Finally he stands on the balcony and welcomes the brilliant torch-light procession which the nation has arranged in his honor. The light flickers on the Greek façade of the house and on his

own expressive profile. But behind him lies his life in darkness, his home in dissolution, his favorite son dead, his life-content shattered. Yet he makes his last speech about the revolt of the human mind, about the stupefying influence of



*Valdemar Möller as the High Priest and Ulla Poulsen as Mariamne  
in "An Idealist," Produced at the Royal Theater in 1939*

faith, and about the triumphal march of free thought through the ages.

Victory—that is also what the Dictator in the drama *Victory* fights for. He wants the final, unconditional victory over Abyssinia, which is to assure Italy against domestic and foreign foes. This victory is so great a goal that no price can be too heavy. In order to achieve it, the Dictator

crushes his own better purposes, breaks his promises, and goes against everything which he knows to be right. He breaks with the Church because it will not approve of his way; he loses his wife because she will not follow him further than her faith allows. His son returns from the war castrated and a wreck. Thousands of young men are corpses, stuck in the mud



of Abyssinia's rainy mountain gorges. But he has attained the goal, he has won the victory. The tribute of the nation rises toward him. He, too, is about to step out on the balcony in order to enjoy his triumph. In contrast to Professor Krater, he really enjoys it, and it hardens him. His wife, who loves him, understands this, and therefore she thrusts a rapier into his heart in the very hour of frenzied joy. She does it in order to save him from hardening, to win him for that God which is hers and which once was his.

Herod, Professor Krater, and the Dictator are the three colossi in Kaj Munk's dramas. But there is dry rot at the core of their being, and just as they stretch out their hands to grasp the final triumph, they collapse in chaos. Just because life was so beautiful, strength so great, endowment so brilliant, their fall was inevitable. Like Titans they stormed against Heaven in order to depose God. As Titans they fell to dizzy depths and their failure was inconceivably great. Resembling these three, but on a smaller scale and less fascinating in the working out, are the leading persons in *Cant* and *The Elect*. They, too, are only willing to give unto Caesar. Therefore they lose their whole stake—life itself.

Quite apart from all the other important characters in Kaj Munk's dramas, we see Professor Mensch in *He Sits by the Melting-Pot*. He is the only one on whom judgment is not pronounced; for he is the only one who chooses God and not the world. This feeble, fussy, aging scholar, who seems so insignificant by the side of the other lusty, gigantic figures—he is the one who wins over them all; for he carries in his weak human vessel the flame that does not consume but gives out light and warmth. He is whirled into the vortex of great events and is tempted by the most alluring promises—he may become a Cabinet minister, he may receive the German prize, if he will only deny God and the Jews. But he will not. He grows in the

play; his bent back is straightened; the fire comes into his veiled gaze, and at last he stands upright in the final scene—just that scene in which all the other leading characters in Munk's dramas are crushed to dust. Professor Mensch stands there immutable, strong, and convincing. For his authority is not of this world. His faith is not bound to treasures that can be corrupted by moth and rust. There could be no better way of throwing light on the meaning of Munk's authorship than to contrast on the one hand the strong, earthbound, vigorous persons lusting for power, on whom judgment is pronounced, and on the other hand the feeble, unselfish human being who is raised up and rewarded.

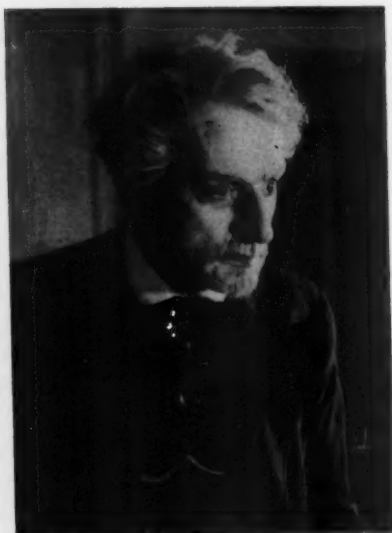
## 4

If the problem—which is always the same problem—is stated with energy in all Kaj Munk's dramas, it is worked out with equal energy. His dramatic works are, technically and artistically viewed, the first plays in Danish literature which break wholly and consciously with the naturalistic drama, its demand for naturalness and its love of conversation, its subdued, delicate, and "human" discussion. Against this conversational drama, Kaj Munk reacts violently. His plays seek to restore the theatrical element in the drama. The stage is not a mirror in which conventional everyday life is feebly reflected. The stage should be a forum where all the passions of life, clothed in bold, strong colors, clash with one another in vehement scenes. The theater is the true reality, tense with contradictions, dangerous, dynamic, and disturbing. It is a rainbow leading from poetry as light as butterflies' wings to the fiercest brutality. In the theater the audience should be roughly awakened, moved and frightened, made happy and miserable. The theater should not be entertainment but existence.

After Kaj Munk, or simultaneously with him, a group of young dramatists in

the Scandinavian countries have worked for this restoration of the theatrical element in the modern drama, a movement which could also be called a return to the grand drama. Behind the naturalistic stage, these modern dramatists stretch out their hands to the melodrama and tragedy of romanticism. They discard the meticulous upbuilding in three or five beautifully constructed acts with few persons and a consciously stagnant action. They use crowds of persons; they break their plays off in the middle or make of them a cascade of quick scenes leaping one upon the other, each of vital significance and strong dramatic effect. They have borrowed from the film its rapid movement and saturation, but in such a way as to benefit the drama. They have filled the theater again with a modern public which had been gradually driven away by the old whispering plays.

In Denmark Svend Borberg, Ejnar Howalt, and Kjeld Abell use the same technique as Kaj Munk because, although they do not agree with him in the ideology of his authorship, they fight side by side with him for the same artistic con-



Henrik Bentzon as Professor Krater in "In the Breakers"

ception of the drama, its nature and problems. In Sweden, Pär Lagerkvist is the best known name within this school; in Norway, Nordahl Grieg; but no one has in theory and practice expressed this common striving so convincingly and with such authority as Kaj Munk. Practically, he has done it in his dramas; theoretically, in a very important article which he published a short time after the fiasco of his first play. Today *An Idealist* is considered by everybody the most important Danish drama that has been written since the World War. In 1928 it failed because it was so alarmingly new, and the Royal Theater did not know how to stage it. No one understood that anything important was happening to the Danish theater. Or at least no one but Kaj Munk, who in the above-mentioned article formulated the program on which the entire modern dramatic production of the North has been founded. He wrote: "It seems impossible that we here at home should fail to respond to the new artistic ideas awakening all over the world. A young generation has grown up which does not go to the theater in order to sit prettily and politely looking at pretty and polite things; its appetite for life is too lusty to be fed with crackers and tea and have its mouth wiped with whispering pieces (*Hviske-Stykker*), the authors of which must have been full of nervous dread lest by chance anything should happen on the stage. Their eyes have seen too much of the red mist of reality to be held by hour-long soul dissections. They prefer the film; there at least something happens, people fight and run away, are cheated and forgiven, kiss and murder; there a life is mirrored which has not been carefully thought out in a bloodless poet's weary brain, but has sprung from the flaming contradictions of purpose as revealed by God Himself: life from that world in which this younger generation has grown up, where people rose up against people with existence as a stake,

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*Johannes Meyer as Professor Dorn, Holger Gabrielsen as Professor Mensch, and Holger Reenberg as Bishop Beugel in "He Sits by the Melting-Pot"*

where necessity broke all laws, and good and evil no more existed because everyone thought only of himself and was a God unto himself, while heads fell and limbs were crushed and brains burst, and peace came with labor troubles and deadened senses and poverty and pestilence. This youth will demand that art must stand right out in the struggle of the world if they are not to yawn and turn away from it. If art will not do this—if it wants to remain refined and stay within its well-known tastefully furnished living room, with the windows closed and the doors locked, and the man and wife and the friend each sitting in a chair—well, then it will have to stay there and die of its own narrowness, forgotten and forsaken. But art has only one answer: an affirmation of life. It must plunge in, no matter how terrifying."

In carrying out this program Kaj Munk uses the method of meeting its demand for passion and vehemence in every little scene. His dialogue is vigorous, flexible, witty, or pathetic as the situation demands, his characters are of all kinds, but each one determined by his leading quality. They are goodness, hatred, will, and weakness, clothed in the timeless costumes of creative power. Very rarely do they change and develop. Professor Mensch is the only one who is portrayed in such a way that we follow his development. The other persons in Munk's plays generally remain themselves, although they may disguise themselves and play the hypocrite or the flatterer in order to attain their ends. The character is unchanged until it is crushed by external powers or by Divine judgment. Behind all disguises there is a

great simplicity which requires subtle suggestiveness if the plays are not to become mere diagrams. Kaj Munk has this creative suggestiveness and his characters move us because of it. They are living individuals in the drama, at the same time as they are embodiments of the principles in Kaj Munk's visible and invisible world.

## 5

In his striving toward the "grand drama" Kaj Munk reaches out beyond Ibsen to clasp the hand of Oehlenschläger. He loves Oehlenschläger and constantly pays tribute to him. In the same manner he feels akin to Grundtvig, whom he exalts at the expense of Georg Brandes, and to Johannes Ewald, whose lyric poems have influenced his own serious verse. With Oehlenschläger he strives for the grandiose lines of the drama; with Grundtvig he points to the testimony of history, to the old and ever young strength of the North and to the gushing well-spring of religion; like Ewald, finally, he claims the right to admire what he finds admirable even if "the age" should for the moment fail to

appreciate it. Kaj Munk stands as squarely on Danish and Christian ground as any poet of the Golden Age of Danish literature. But he stands there as a modern man, very much alive to timely issues. He speaks the language of his generation even to the point of slanginess, and yet he gives expression to the great emotions. Therefore he has been able to pour new life into the hymn and the national anthem, two venerable forms of composition which our generation has little taste or talent for. His published verse shows that he bows to the great tradition in Danish lyric poetry, but he gives it warmth from his own soul until it ceases to be tradition and becomes a vital part of today's life and today's issues. By means of a unique dramatic skill, a fascinating gift of language, and the wealth of a vigorous and healthy mind, Kaj Munk fights his battle for the God in whom he believes and for the country that he loves. And even those who stand farthest aloof from his ideas and from his faith, acknowledge without reservation his talent. People may disagree about his direction, but not about his dimensions.





## Who Will Care for the Old?

THE NEWSPAPERS IN SWEDEN are discussing a situation that is no doubt prevalent in many countries, but has rarely been so fully and clearly presented as in the Yearbook recently issued by the Swedish Association for Social Work. Instead of, as one might expect, dealing with the details of social work and legislation, the volume treats in a series of revolutionary essays the entire population problem of the country. An editorial in *Svenska Dagbladet* thus sums up the argument:

"The point of departure is the change in relative ages that will take place when the children of the modern small families grow up. According to the deductions of Professor Sten Wahnlund, we may expect that the age group of from 25 to 30 years will decrease from 1,620,000 in 1940 to 1,220,000 in 1960, in other words, by one fourth. The proportion is the same for men and women. At the same time the older age groups will increase, the group of from 35 to 50 years by 140,000; that of from 50 to 65 by 320,000, and that over 65 by 210,000. We are therefore confronted by a decided rise in the average age level.

"Inasmuch as the population as a whole is still increasing, we shall have to keep up the production of the necessities of life. Any hope of expanding our industrial activities will have to be abandoned; it may be difficult enough to keep up the standard we have now reached. In order to enable us to do even that, three measures are recommended: first, raising the pension age; second, utilizing the working capacity of women more effectively, and, finally, training the persons who are only partially disabled and placing them in productive work whenever possible.

"These suggested changes are not recommended merely in order to keep up the amount of production. Another consideration that weighs heavily is the fact that our whole carefully-planned system of social security will be too expensive for the next generation to carry. Its members will be so few that they will not be able to provide for the pensioning of the aged, nor to maintain our numerous institutions for the wholly or partially disabled, unless some way can be found to lighten the burden. Formerly we could count on six or seven persons in the productive age to care for each person above that age. Now we shall have to reckon that in twenty years' time there will be only three or four younger persons to care for each one of the aged, and inasmuch as the greatest number of old people relatively are found in the cities, there will be some communities where there will be only two persons of working age to support each one of the superannuated. This is more than the breadwinning occupations of our cities can carry.

"We have therefore come to the pass when we have an elaborate system of social security but lack the means to pay for it. Our generation has provided for itself at the expense of the coming generation, but has not seen to it that the next generation should be strong enough to carry the burden. The theory which has been current with us as elsewhere, that a decrease in the number of children born would tend to raise the standard of living for all, has been crushingly disproved. The exact opposite is the truth.

"New-Malthusianism, which was one of the leading ideas of the nineteenth century,

was theoretically based on a striving to achieve a favorable balance between population and production. . . . It now appears that this entire ideology has had very serious consequences. Under its influence Sweden has arrived at the exact opposite of a favorable balance; and the limitation of families, which was supposed to be the means of insuring better living conditions for all, is threatening to destroy what we have already built up."

## Stauning on Denmark's Position

THE ACTION OF DENMARK in signing a non-aggression pact with Germany while the other Northern nations declined to do so, has, naturally, aroused comment throughout Scandinavia. Opinion in Denmark is by no means unanimous. The retiring Conservative leader, Christmas Möller, expressed regret that the unanimity which had characterized the attitude of the Northern nations was thus broken. The Conservative organ, *Berlingske Tidende*, editorially pointed out that, while there was no actual disagreement, the psychological effect upon the other Northern nations had not been happy. We quote a speech by the Danish Prime Minister at a popular gathering at Halden, Norway, June 17, to celebrate a Day of Northern Democracy. Addresses were made also by Prime Minister Per Albin Hansson of Sweden and Prime Minister Nygaardsvold of Norway. Mr. Stauning said, according to the report in *Politiken*:

"In times past the unity of the North has often been broached, but the theories concerning it have not taken sufficient thought of the realities of life. The Northern countries are free and independent, and the different nations do not wish to give up any of their independence. This does not exclude cooperation among them. Nor does it exclude mutual support when conditions require it, as we saw during the war of 1914-1918.

"Nevertheless it must not be forgotten that the Northern nations, in spite of similarity in language and culture, are very different, and that especially their geographical position and economic interests forbid a uniform attitude and action in the various situations that may arise. We have recently experienced such a situation, when President Roosevelt's appeal occasioned a German offer of non-aggression pacts. When the other Northern nations did not feel called upon to follow the same line as Denmark, the reason was, of course, the difference in geographical position and connections. We Danes have, as a matter of course, not meddled in the deliberations or actions of the other Northern countries, but are grateful for the comprehension of the Danish viewpoint which they have expressed.

"It has been argued in certain quarters that by this decision Denmark has resigned from the North. But this is not true. Denmark has accepted the logical consequences of that independence which prevails—and must prevail—and which every one of the Northern countries has given expression to many times.

"There is no political alliance in the North, and there can be none. But that does

not exclude possible cooperation, and I have on former occasions expressed the opinion that we must stick to what is possible. The political position of the countries of the world cannot build on sentiments which perhaps are at cross purposes with the realities of life.

"It has been suggested that the Northern countries could make themselves less dependent on the great powers by increasing their trade with one another, in other words by creating a Northern economic unit. This is a very attractive idea, but it is best to tell the truth and look the truth in the eyes: it is not a practicable idea. The truth is that such a unity is not possible. If the countries of the North are unable to buy our products, we cannot buy in those countries. As trade is organized at present, we have to buy where we sell—it is barter rather than marketing that prevails. We cannot, therefore, create an economic unit in the North, but that by no means excludes that we may render one another important services in case the situation in the world outside should cause interruption of trade.

"The North is not a military unit, and the North cannot become an economic unit, but the North is a neutral unit which, not only mutually but also in relation to other nations, renounces the use of military force unless its neutrality is threatened. Preparation for this eventuality is necessary, and of course each nation must say for itself what action it will take. The Government and parliament of each nation must decide what measures are possible and what ought to be the determining factors in case trouble should come.

"Our aim must be to assert our right of self-determination and to keep the Northern countries out of war. No power should be able to count on having the Northern nations on its side, if peace is not maintained. But the countries of the North must be prepared to give one another support of a neutral kind. And we should develop that sense of moral solidarity which is an important element in our relations."

## Koht on Neutrality

THE FOREIGN MINISTER OF NORWAY, Dr. Halvdan Koht, contributes an article on "Problems of Neutrality" to the magazine *Le Nord*, International Review of the Northern Countries. He states that though "personally in favor of trying the experiment of the League" he had, since the beginning of the Thirties, followed its development "with increasing misgivings." He concludes:

"If today the small States desire to remain neutral in case of war, it is an absolute necessity for them to keep outside all kinds of political alliances and to prevent the League of Nations from becoming a political alliance at the service of certain interests of power. When it appeared that the universal system of sanctions had become obsolete, some of the powers in the League suggested, in 1936, a system of regional pacts within the League, founded upon the idea that certain groups of States might combine in applying sanctions in a certain region. The foreign minister of the Netherlands warned against such a proposal, and I seconded him, pointing to the danger that such regional pacts might easily change into military alliances; if, I said, we do not want to see the League of Nations take the shape of a big military

alliance, we will still less like to see such alliances rising within the League. In the report of the Norwegian Government upon the reform of the League, given in the same year, it was added that, in any case, an absolute condition for the acknowledgment of such regional pacts should be that it was left to the League of Nations as a whole to decide whether sanctions should be applicable. It seems that the idea of such pacts as instruments of the League has by now been completely given up. . . .

"Against the policy of neutrality it is often objected that in a general war it would be impossible for any country to remain outside, and, of course, the danger of being drawn into the war would be imminent, especially so on the supposition of a so-called totalitarian war. Anyhow there is one primary condition absolutely indispensable to the possibility of remaining neutral, and that is the firmly stated will of the nation, even before the war, to maintain a perfect neutrality. The proof of such a will is that she keeps steadily clear of all alliances with any block of powers forming itself in the world.

"As to the Northern countries, nobody has emphasized this more strongly than the Swedish foreign minister, Mr. Sandler. In a broadcast speech on April 4, last year, he declared in pointed terms that in the play of alliances nobody could reckon with the participation of Sweden; she wanted to steer her course independent of all power-blocks.

"Even bilateral pacts of non-aggression might appear suspicious from such a point of view. On April 14 of this year the President of the United States sent an appeal to the German Chancellor, Mr. Hitler, asking him in the interest of peace to conclude non-aggression treaties with a certain number of States, amongst them the four Northern nations. On April 28, Mr. Hitler declared himself willing to do so, and he offered non-aggression treaties to all the Northern governments. These governments discussed the matter with each other, and the result was that, in the answers delivered to the German government May 17, Denmark as a neighbour nation expressed herself prepared to negotiate a non-aggression treaty with Germany, while the other governments, not representing neighbour countries, declared that it would go outside their political system to enter into such treaties with Germany. Here it must be added that both Norway and Sweden had previously refused to conclude treaties of the same character with the Soviet Union, while Finland, being a neighbour country, had made her non-aggression treaty with the Soviet Union in 1932. Evidently the deciding criterion for all the Northern States was the neighbouring relations; non-aggression treaties with distant countries would seem to obtain a political character that might come in conflict with strict neutrality. So the different attitude taken by the Northern governments as to the German offer does not mean any difference with regard to their will to maintain neutrality, and the cooperation of the Northern nations in this respect will continue as before.

"The cooperation of the Northern nations is one of the most solid pillars of their neutrality. By economic cooperation they are made able to resist more efficiently the economic pressure that in case of war might endanger their neutrality. As to the military problems of neutrality they have had common rules adopted since the year 1853, and those rules have been revised lately according to modern technics of warfare. It is the earnest hope of all these nations that they may succeed in staying outside all armed conflicts, and they feel that it might be a blessing to the rest of the world, if they are able to keep their countries clear of a general conflagration of the world that would destroy so much of social values and human lives."



# THE QUARTER'S HISTORY



**SWEDEN**

THE SWEDISH LING SYSTEM of gymnastics demonstrated its undiminished popularity all over the world in a colorful and impressive manner in Stockholm toward the end of July, when an international Lingiad was held, commemorating the one hundredth anniversary of the death of Per Henrik Ling, founder of the system.

More than 7,500 young men and women, representing thirty-six countries, took part in this world gymnastic festival. Sweden had the largest contingent, followed by Denmark with 2,000 gymnasts. From Germany came 1,400. Norway, Great Britain, Esthonia, and Finland also had large groups. The Lingiad was formally opened by King Gustaf V, first royal patron (Crown Prince Gustaf Adolf being second royal patron), in the Stockholm Stadium on July 20 before a throng of 20,000 spectators. After an address by Prime Minister Per Albin Hansson, all the troupes, Swedish and foreign, paraded past the royal box. Later King Gustaf unveiled a bust of Ling, donated by the Swedish Gymnastic Teachers' Society. The following days were devoted to exhibitions in various outdoor and indoor arenas, and the Lingiad ended on August 4 at Malma, south of Stockholm, where an international gymnast camp was held.

CROWN PRINCESS LOUISE of Sweden on July 13 observed her fiftieth birthday. With her husband, Crown Prince Gustaf Adolf, she has twice visited the United States, once in 1926, when they crossed the continent on their way around the world, and the last time in 1938, when they attended the celebrations in New York, Boston, Chicago, and many other

cities in connection with the Tercentenary of the founding of the New Sweden Colony under Queen Christina on the banks of the Delaware River. The Crown Princess is tremendously popular in Sweden, where she has endeared herself to the people by her democratic nature and her active interest in a number of charitable enterprises. She is a great granddaughter of Queen Victoria of Great Britain and a niece of the late Empress of Russia. Her father was the late Prince Louis of Battenberg, ranking Admiral of the British Navy at the outbreak of the World War in 1914, and later given the title of Marquess of Milford-Haven. During the War, Crown Princess Louise was a nurse at the military hospital at Nevers, in central France. She was married to the Swedish Crown Prince on November 3, 1923, at St. James's Chapel in London.

MORE FERVENTLY ANXIOUS than ever before to help preserve world peace, Sweden, nevertheless is viewing the cloudy international horizon with sober eyes, recognizing the necessity of preparations. Among a score of measures recently adopted, private in nature and not inspired or suggested by the government, is the so-called *Kvinnoberedskapen*, or the Women's Preparedness Corps. The purpose of this group is to find women suitable to take over certain parts of men's work if war should come. A canvass was recently made of Stockholm by volunteer workers, who inquired of the women folk in each household what they were best fitted to do, what they liked best to do, and what they could most quickly learn to do. Therefore, in an emergency, there would be little waste motion and little confusion, since women workers would know beforehand what is expected of them, and would report, like soldiers, to their posts. This system would mean a

minimum of friction and guarantee the almost flawless continuity of scores of economic chores.

A practical beginning was made in the summer on a large estate, Sandemars, near Stockholm, where a contingent of city girls received their first instruction in milking cows, picking berries, taking up potatoes, and raking hay. Despite the early rising and the long hours, the girls stood the test very well, and the proprietress, Baroness Braunerhielm, was pleased with their good humor, industry, and interest in their work.

A LARGE EXHIBITION of contemporary Swedish, Danish, Norwegian, Finnish, and Icelandic art—the first of its kind ever held—was opened in Gothenburg in July by King Gustaf. The initiative was taken by Professor Axel Romdahl, head of the local art museum, and was arranged at the Hall of the Gothenburg Fair by him and his two assistants, Carl Nordenfalk and Tor Bjurström. The Norwegian commissioner was Willi Midelfart, the Danish was William Scharff, the Finnish, Felix Nylund, and the Icelandic, Jón Stefánsson.

HJALMAR SÖDERBERG, one of the greatest novelists, playwrights, and short story writers who ever came out of Sweden, in July observed his seventieth birthday in Copenhagen, where he has lived in voluntary exile for many years. Although Söderberg's style is strongly individual, it is vaguely reminiscent of the writings of Anatole France and J. P. Jacobsen. He became famous almost overnight with the publication, in 1901, of *Martin Bircks ungdom* (*Martin Birck's Youth*, translated into English by Charles Wharton Stork), and emerged as the spokesman for the nostalgic spirit of his era, its disillusion, and its poetic melancholy. All his works reveal a blend of the dreaming and mystic North with the coolly analytical spirit of France. Others among his well-known

and, at the time, heatedly discussed novels are *Doktor Glas*, the tender, almost cameo-like *Förvillelser* (Errors of Youth), *Det mörknar över vägen* (The Road Grows Darker), and *Den allvarsamma leken* (The Serious Play). His short stories rank among the finest written in Sweden—brief, incisive, sensitive. His dramatic production is not rich, but what it lacks in volume it makes up for in quality. Especially must be mentioned *Gertrud* and the delicately wrought one-act play, *Aftonstjärnan* (The Evening Star). In some of his latest books Söderberg has made a series of strangely heavy-handed and inept attacks on Christianity, a realm in which he moves with a certain lack of comfort and sureness. As a delineator of Stockholm during the latter years of King Oscar II's reign, he remains, next to Strindberg, the unapproached master.

HARALD ANDRÉ, a former first director at the Royal Opera in Stockholm, was recently appointed to head this institution, succeeding John Forsell, who has retired. André, who was born in 1879, studied music at the conservatories in Munich and Berlin, and served as first director at the Stockholm Opera from 1907 to 1908 and from 1932 to 1936.



CROWN PRINCE OLAV'S AND CROWN PRINCESS MÄRTHA'S RETURN to Norway, after their trans-continental tour of the United States during May and June, became a spontaneously triumphant welcome home. The *Stavangerfjord*, which was the royal ship for the return trip from New York across the Atlantic, arrived in Bergen late in the evening of July 14 after a smooth seven days' crossing.

In interviews the royal couple stressed in particular the fine hospitality they had met everywhere. "The whole journey was like a fairy tale," the Crown Prince said. It was impossible to name any single event more outstanding than another; the entire experience, he said, "was far greater than anything we had ever dreamed of."

The enthusiastic reception in Bergen, where 30,000 to 40,000 people occupied all available space on the pier, was a forerunner of similar demonstrations at other places around the south coast. In Stavanger a program had been arranged in one of the city parks. In his speech, Crown Prince Olav reminded his hearers that it was from Stavanger that the first emigrant ship, the small sloop *Restaurationen*, sailed for America with fifty-two passengers, on July 4, 1825, an event which inaugurated the great emigration movement from Norway to America in the nineteenth century.

All the way from Færder light at the mouth of the Oslo Fjord to the capital, a distance of about seventy-five miles, flag-decorated sail and motor boats, carrying wildly enthusiastic people, swarmed along the liner's course to her pier. The squadron of welcoming boats became larger and larger as the ship carrying the royal family neared the city. Never before have there been so many motor boats seen along the inner reaches of the fjord. An enormous gathering of people, numbering many thousands, filled the pier in Oslo and nearby points of vantage. Wild enthusiasm broke loose when the Crown Prince couple with their children, who had met them in Bergen, appeared on a raised tribune on the pier. Halvdan Koht, minister of foreign affairs, made the official speech of welcome on behalf of the Government and thanked the Crown Prince for his work of promoting still stronger ties of friendship between Norway and the United States.

In appreciation of the success with which the visit to America had been car-

ried out, Crown Prince Olav was promoted to the rank of general in the army and admiral in the navy.

On July 17 King Haakon gave a banquet at the palace in honor of the Crown Prince and Crown Princess. The King was seated with the Crown Princess and the Crown Prince with Mrs. Borden Harriman, American Minister to Norway. The King made a heartfelt speech of thanks to the Crown Prince couple for the successful way in which they had carried through their visit to America. The Crown Prince in his speech of reply mentioned especially his unforgettable meeting with President Roosevelt, "the most renowned statesman of our time and a man of outstanding personality."

AN EVENT OF IMPORTANCE IN THE FIELD OF ARCHEOLOGY occurred in Norway in June when Professor A. W. Brögger, head of the department of archeology at the University of Oslo, dug the first shovelful of earth from the top of the ancient grave-mound known as Raknehaugen in the district of Romerike near Oslo. According to local legend, the mound is believed to contain the remains of King Rakne, who ruled in that district in early Viking times. Raknehaugen is not only the largest grave-mound in the Scandinavian North, but the largest in all northern Europe. The work of excavation is proceeding with the most modern, scientific methods under the leadership of Professor Brögger and Dr. Sigurd Grieg, Dr. Brögger's assistant in the University Collection of Antiquities.

An attempt at excavation was made by the archeologist, A. Lorange, some time in the nineteenth century, but the effort was abandoned for lack of means. This time the work is made possible by funds provided by the Department of Social Affairs. An initial appropriation was granted of 50,000 kroner.

In the beautiful rural region of Romerike, one of the most fertile in all

Norway, age-old legends are retold from generation to generation to the effect that King Rakne was buried in the huge mound with great pomp and circumstance, and with him were buried his two milk-white chargers, and possibly much of his other earthly goods of value. The story has it also that the mound was lined inside with heavy timber, and Dr. Lorange did actually strike timber in his digging, which seemed to confirm the legend. He also found a few skeletal remains of horses. Since Dr. Lorange's time until the present excavating work began, nothing had been done, and the mound remained as a great unsolved mystery. The pieces of timber found have meanwhile been subjected to scientific investigation and study. This has resulted in the fixing, tentatively, of the date when the trees were cut down as about 930.

Dr. Grieg explained to visitors that the laborers are not only given work, but also instruction in history, and other cultural courses, as well as in technical branches. Professor Brögger made it known that after the completion of the work of excavation, the ancient mound will be restored to its original size and shape; where trees have been cut down, replanting will be done by experts, and the immediate surroundings will be given a park-like appearance.

Norway has a large number of ancient grave-mounds in various parts of the country, particularly in the district of Borre, near the naval station of Horten, which are believed to contain Viking ships and other valuable archeological remains, and also several important mounds on the west coast.

WITH THE OPENING OF THE AIRPORT AT FORNEBO, near Oslo, on June 1, Norway became at last completely linked with the widespread network of European aerial routes. The long delay in bringing the country into the network of airship lines was occasioned chiefly by the difficul-

ty, in so mountainous a country, of finding suitable airport locations. The country has now several excellently equipped airports, and the latest addition, Fornebo, was declared by foreign flyers present on the opening day to be "the world's most beautiful," located as it is in a setting of matchless natural beauty and in the immediate vicinity of the capital.

The regular Dutch route between Amsterdam and Oslo was inaugurated by the arrival on the opening day of a large plane of the Royal Dutch Air Lines, the first to land at Fornebo as a route traffic plane. The commander, Captain Steinbeck, brought flowers from Queen Wilhelmina as a present to the Norwegian royal family. On board the Dutch airship, a Douglas, was also a group of journalist observers representing various newspapers in Holland. The plane returned to Amsterdam the same day with several passengers. Captain Riiser-Larsen sent a beautiful doll in Norwegian peasant costume as a present to Holland's little Princess Beatrix.

The next event was the arrival of the Danish Foche Wulf Condor route plane from Copenhagen. This plane is expected to reduce the former flying time between Oslo and Copenhagen by fifty minutes. Mr. Westfal, chief of the Danish air lines' press office, brought three hundred bouquets of Denmark's most fragrant flowers for distribution among the patients in the Oslo hospitals. The flowers were carefully packed and were as fresh and fragrant as when picked a few hours earlier. Following these events was the arrival of the first regular passenger route plane, the Swedish Aërotransport's three-motor Fokker, *Värmland*, which covers the regular passenger route between Oslo and Copenhagen.

The important route on Amsterdam is flown in both directions every day except Sundays. The plane leaves Oslo every morning at ten with a stop at Kristiansand on the south coast, arriving in Amsterdam



at three in the afternoon. Passengers may continue by plane to London and other points in the British Isles or to Brussels, Antwerp, or Paris. A new route has also been opened between Kristiansand and Aalborg, Denmark, continuing to Copenhagen from where connections can be made the same day with Hamburg and Berlin.

Another route which is expected to prove of major interest to tourists is the Midnight Sun Airway, inaugurated at the same time as the other routes. This airway will be operated three times a week, with departures northbound from Bergen every other day and southbound from Tromsø every other day, leaving at seven in the morning and arriving at four in the afternoon.

AN INTERNATIONAL POLAR EXHIBITION, the first of its kind in the world, will be held in Bergen during the summer of 1940. The official opening ceremonies will be on May 15. Officially it will be known as a polar research exhibition planned within a framework of the following divisions: the Arctic ocean, Greenland, Jan Mayen, Svalbard, Franz Josef Land, Nova Zembla, the islands north of Asia and North America in the Arctic ocean, and the Antarctic continent with its adjacent islands and oceans.

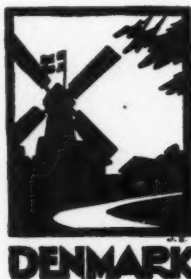
Those in charge of the preparations are planning to make it both a scientific and a popular exhibition with a section devoted to Northern winter sports and their evolution from the earliest times to the present day. There is available a vast material to choose from in planning an exhibition of this character, and the committee in charge is sparing no efforts to make the enterprise attractive and valuable from a scientific, educational, and popular point of view. What man has accomplished in the Arctic regions in the past, and the plans which are now under way will be graphically exhibited.

Charts will be shown of the routes fol-

lowed by the several North and South polar expeditions together with models of the seagoing vessels, airplanes, airships, instruments, and other equipment used by the explorers in their battle with the ice and in man's final conquest of the earth's two glacial poles.

There will be a section for meteorological and other scientific investigations, and the races of people inhabiting the polar regions will be given special attention by a staff of research workers. Cultural work carried on for the benefit of these children of nature will be displayed by carefully prepared graphs together with illustrations of the activity of these races in, and their utilization of, their native regions.

In connection with the exhibition, an international Polar Research Conference will be held by delegates from scientific bodies of many different nations, among them several of the greatest living authorities on the subject of polar research.



IT WAS A GREAT DISAPPOINTMENT to all those who have labored for the new Constitution when it was defeated by a narrow margin. After having been passed by the Landsting on March 9 and the Folketing on March 10, it was confirmed by the new Rigsdag elected for that purpose, and nothing remained but to have it approved by the plebiscite, which was held May 23. The result was regarded as a foregone conclusion, but to the amazement of all who had followed events, the Constitution lacked 12,000 votes of adoption.

Actually there was an overwhelming majority for the new Constitution. The votes in favor numbered 966,037; those against 85,401. But for adoption it was necessary to have 978,039, or 45 per cent of the total number of voters in the

country. This provision was made a law some years ago upon the initiative of the late political leader, J. C. Christensen, on the ground that, unless the people as a whole cared enough about a constitutional amendment to go to the polls, it should not be made law. Although the provision had nothing to do with the present issue, it is a curious coincidence that it was Christensen's party, the Liberal or "Venstre," which was opposed to the new Constitution, and whose members negated it by staying away from the polls. It was in a manner defeated by the leader's dead hand. There is no likelihood at present that the issue of amending the Constitution will be taken up again in the near future.

THE STAUNING GOVERNMENT is made up of Socialist and Radical members, and since these parties continue to have a large majority in the Rigsdag, the Government will not regard the defeat in the plebiscite as a reason for resigning. The Prime Minister, who has now held office for more than a decade, will continue at his post.

On the other hand, the leader of the Conservative group in the Rigsdag, Christmas Möller, had declared before the plebiscite that if the new Constitution failed of acceptance, he would resign, and he has kept his word. It was largely due to his incessant efforts, reaching over years, that the Conservative party supported the Constitution, although its two provisions, the abolition of the Landsting and the lowering of the voting age from twenty-five to twenty-three years, were opposed to older Conservative opinion. Christmas Möller has represented the liberalizing tendencies within the party, resisting at once the old authoritarian and the new Nazi tendencies. He is liked and respected by all party groups. His constituents in Odense have asked him to remain in the Rigsdag, and he will no doubt continue to wield a

strong influence. As party leader in his place Mr. Henning Hasle has been elected.

ALL THE NORTHERN COUNTRIES received from Germany identical offers of non-aggression pacts, but only Denmark accepted. Norway, Sweden, and Finland replied courteously that they did not feel themselves threatened by Germany and had no occasion to sign any special agreement. The fact that Denmark is the only one of the countries of the North which is contiguous with Germany puts her in a slightly different position, and makes a non-aggression pact a natural expression of her strong desire to be neutral. There has, however, been some reaction against the pact, especially in Conservative circles, not because of its intrinsic contents, but because it breaks that unanimity of the Northern nations which is regarded as desirable in the present state of the world.

The agreement was signed in Berlin May 31, and is quite brief. It reads as follows: "The German Reich and the Kingdom of Denmark will under no circumstances have recourse to war or other means of force toward each other. Should a third party attack one of the two contracting parties, the other party will in no way aid in such an attack." The treaty became operative as soon as it was ratified by both countries. It is binding for a period of ten years and can be renewed for a similar period if application is made a year before the expiration of the term. An accompanying protocol states that, in case either party should be attacked by a third party, neither of them is compelled to break off normal trade relations with the attacking party. The continuance of such relations shall not be regarded as a breach of the agreement. When the treaty was discussed in the Danish Landsting, the question as to what constituted "normal trade relations" was brought up. Foreign Minister Munch replied that it

meant a volume of trade corresponding to what was customary in times of peace.

NORWAY HAS MADE A COURTEOUS GESTURE toward Denmark by voluntarily returning a number of documents found in the Norwegian State archives which the Norwegian Government felt should by right belong to Denmark. Of course the bulk of documents relating to both countries during their time of union remained in Copenhagen after 1814. A large part of these were presented to Norway by the Danish Government a short time ago, and negotiations regarding others are still pending. Meanwhile Norway has now presented Denmark with the so-called Munich collection of documents concerning Christian II as well as various other collections.

THAT THE GERMANS STILL have room for some of their old cultural interests was demonstrated last May when a group of players from the Royal Theater in Copenhagen visited Berlin and gave a series of performances at the Schiller Theater, the head of which is Heinrich George. The chief of the Royal Theater, Kaj Hegermann-Lindencrone, accompanied the troupe. The two plays chosen were one Danish and one German, both played in Danish. Holberg's *Erasmus Montanus* was given with Holger Gabrielsen in the title rôle and was a tremendous success. The international appeal of Holberg was once more proved. The selection of Schiller's *Maria Stuart*, Mr. Hegermann-Lindencrone said in his speech, might seem like bringing owls to Athens, but this too was exceedingly well received. Bodil Ipsen took the part of Elizabeth, one of her most brilliant creations, while Karin Nellemose was Mary Stuart. The theater was filled night after night. The actors are unanimous in praising the courtesy and consideration shown them.

THE SUMMER PERFORMANCE of *Hamlet* at Kronborg promises to become an insti-

tution. Two years ago the REVIEW printed an article about the successful experiment made by the Old Vic players with Laurence Olivier as Hamlet and Vivien Leigh as Ophelia. This year John Gielgud, perhaps the most famous Hamlet in the world today, played the part of the Prince of Denmark with Fay Compton as Ophelia and a first class ensemble of players. Though it was the middle of July, the weather was cold and rainy, but in spite of that, the court of Kronborg was well filled every evening.

John Gielgud, who was instructor as well as principal actor, had chosen to build a Shakespeare stage, a copy of those used at the Globe and Swan Theaters. In this way he produced a more intimate effect, but some Danish critics thought a larger stage would have harmonized better with the great spaces of the castle. Regarding Gielgud's Hamlet they have nothing but superlatives of praise. Viggo Cavling writes that "more beautiful English never came from human lips," and Svend Borberg is especially impressed with the youthfulness of this Hamlet, a youthfulness which he thinks gives the key to the character and tragic destiny of the Prince of Denmark.

During the festival a memorial tablet in honor of Shakespeare was unveiled at Kronborg. The tablet carries a portrait relief of the Bard of Avon and is the work of the sculptor Utzon Frank. The unveiling was done by Fay Compton.

THE CONSECRATION OF BISHOP SCHARLING in Frue Kirke in Copenhagen June 11 was participated in by prelates from all the Northern countries except Iceland. Sweden was represented by Archbishop Eidem, Norway by Bishop Berggrav, and Finland by Bishop Lehtonen. The consecration was performed by the Danish primate, Bishop Fuglsang-Damgaard. It was noted that Archbishop Eidem wore the splendid lilac bishop's mantle presented to his predecessor,

Nathan Söderblom, in token of his ecumenical labors. The King and Queen were present.

Dr. C. I. Scharling began his career as instructor at the University, but has for twenty-two years been in the service of the Church, since 1930 as dean of the diocese of Ribe, where he now becomes bishop. He is known as an eloquent preacher and is a man of wide interests, a humanist in the best sense of the word.

MARTIN ANDERSEN NEXÖ was seventy years old June 26. He was born at Christianshavn in the slums of Copenhagen, although his name to the average reader is usually associated with the island of Bornholm where he spent most of his childhood. Shortly before his birthday Gyldendal issued the fourth and last volume of his autobiography, *Vejs Ende*. The first two volumes have been translated by J. B. C. Watkins and published in English with the title *Under the Open Sky*.

Nexö became popular here more than two decades ago with the publication of *Pelle the Conqueror*. In his own country his championship of the proletariat alienated many from him, but the honors shown him on his seventieth birthday indicate that his genius and his warm humanity have won even those who disagree with his social theories.

#### ICELAND

THE GOVERNMENT OF ICELAND, which had been in power since 1934, resigned last April. The Cabinet was composed of members of the Progressive and Social-Democratic parties. Some of the more radical members of the latter left it in order to join with the Communists to form a new party called the Socialist party. Even after this defection, the old Government had a slight majority in the Althing, but it did not feel strong enough to shoulder the responsibility of devaluing the currency. The hard-hit fishing in-

dustry, which depends chiefly on export, pressed the issue.

The former Prime Minister, Herman Jónasson, immediately formed a new coalition Government consisting of Conservatives, Progressives, and Social-Democrats, who together command 45 out of 49 members of the Althing. No general election was held. The currency has been devalued by about 22 per cent; the former rate of exchange was 22.17 kroner to the pound sterling, the new rate is 27.00 kroner to the pound.

HEATING REYKJAVÍK from the hot springs is a matter that has been under discussion for a long time and will now shortly become a reality. The Copenhagen firm Højgaard and Schultz has contracted to install a hot water system in the capital of Iceland. Only ten miles from the city are numerous hot springs from which water will be conveyed. The pipes are supposed to have a capacity of 280 liters per second, and it is estimated that 200 liters will suffice to heat the houses of the present population at a temperature of 10 degrees above zero. The surplus together with the water that has already circulated through the houses will be led into the greenhouses where fruit and vegetables are cultivated.

The work is to be finished in 1940 at a cost of about \$1,750,000. As Iceland has no coal and very little wood, the undertaking is of tremendous importance to the country.

THE ICELANDIC STEAMSHIP COMPANY has decided to add a new ship to its fleet. It will be the largest boat of Icelandic ownership, with accommodation for 224 passengers, and a considerable space for cargo. The boat will be completed in 1941 and sail the route—Iceland, England, Scandinavia. In case of a European war, it will change its course to America.



## SCANDINAVIANS IN AMERICA

### At the World's Fair

The Scandinavian groups have all had their special days at the World's Fair. That of Norway was held in connection with the dedication. On Denmark's Constitution Day, June 5, the ninetieth anniversary of the present Constitution—which was to have seen the inauguration of the revised one—a celebration was held in the Court of Peace which is thought to be the largest ever arranged by Danes in the East. The great attraction was Niels Bukh with his troupe of twenty-five gymnasts, Danish farmer boys who under his direction gave an exhibition that almost took the beholders' breath away by their mere force and agility, while the beauty, precision, and perfect rhythm made the sight as beautiful as it was amazing. Another feature of the program was a group of the principal characters in Hans Christian Andersen's fairy tales dressed in authentic costumes lent by the Royal Theater in Copenhagen. They were introduced by Mr. Paul Leyssac whose readings from Andersen are well known. In the evening a banquet was given at Shaefer Center, where Minister Wadsted commemorated the Day, speaking of Denmark as a land that had developed in freedom and happiness under its Constitution. The chairman of the Committee for Denmark Day was Mr. C. H. W. Hasselriis.

On a smaller scale, but vital and significant, was Iceland Day celebrated June 17 in the Iceland Pavilion. The occasion was the birthday of the statesman and patriot Jón Sigurdsson, whose memory is revered in Iceland. Mayor LaGuardia spoke of Iceland as a country without abject poverty, without hunger, without illiteracy, and without sick or old people in want of needful care. Sen-

ator Gerald P. Nye of North Dakota hailed Iceland as a country without an army or navy, and Mr. Thor Thors, chairman of Iceland's Commission for the World's Fair, responded on behalf of Iceland. He said his country only wished to live in peace and freedom. "We rely on our friends, and we have no enemies."



Finland and Sweden both chose Midsummer for their special celebrations. Finland Day was on Saturday, June 24, Sweden Day on Sunday, June 25. A feature of the latter was the raising of the huge Maypole decorated with wreaths and ribbons, which had been made ready beforehand, and the dancing round it in the good old Swedish fashion by two hundred folk dancers in the costumes of the various provinces.

Two sets of gymnasts from Sweden added to the festive atmosphere, one a group of young girls from the Sofia Folk School in Stockholm, and one a troupe of men from the Young Men's Christian Association. The three hundred and fifty singers included choirs from most of the Swedish centers in the Eastern States, and there was a large influx of spectators from the surrounding country.

Inasmuch as the Swedish exhibit lays so much stress on social reforms achieved in Sweden, it was particularly appropriate that the main speech at the celebration should be by the present Swedish Minister of Commerce, Gustav Möller, formerly Minister of Social Affairs, to whose energy and vision much of his country's development along modern lines of social responsibility is due. He came to the Cabinet at a time when unemployment was acute, and has not only grappled with that problem but instituted many permanent reforms. He spoke on the theme "Democracy and Freedom Are One" and brought a warm greeting from the people and government of Sweden.

**Count Folke Bernadotte**

Visitors to the Swedish Pavilion at the World's Fair cannot fail to observe a tall, spare gentleman, wearing the same blue uniform as that worn by employees in the pavilion, who seems to be everywhere, infusing everything with his own energy. He is Count Folke Bernadotte, nephew of King Gustaf, son of Prince Oscar Bernadotte who renounced all claim to the throne for himself and his descendants in order to marry a subject. Count Folke Bernadotte, as all Americans know, is married to an American woman, Estelle Manville. When he accepted His Majesty's appointment to the position of High Commissioner of the Swedish Exhibit, he was assuredly not looking for a sinecure, and his generalship has been evident in the success of the Pavilion.

At the same time as he carried through with brilliant results the elaborate program of Sweden Day at the Fair, Count Bernadotte has been much in demand as a speaker at various Swedish-American gatherings all over the country. The non-royal branch of the Bernadotte family has always been active in social, philanthropic, and religious work, and the Count was therefore quite in his element as speaker at the annual celebration of the Old People's Home in Evanston on July 16. From there he flew to the Twin Cities in order to speak at Minnehaha Park at the evening program of Sweden Day, which has been celebrated several years in succession, drawing ever increasing crowds. Finally, Count Bernadotte brought a greeting from the homeland to San Francisco, where Sweden Day at the Golden Gate Exposition was celebrated on August 5.

**A Tribute to Fredrika Bremer**

While speaking at Sweden Day in Minnehaha Park, Governor Harold E. Stassen of Minnesota mentioned that in 1859, eighty years ago, the whole territory of Minnesota had only 7,000 inhab-

itants and among them only four Swedes. It was the visit of Fredrika Bremer, he said, and her description of the country that gave the impetus to Swedish emigration and made Minnesota so largely a Swedish State.

**Memorial to Leif Ericson**

The last function at which Crown Prince Olav officiated, when he was in fact on his way to the pier from which he and the Crown Princess sailed on July 6, was to dedicate a memorial to Leif Ericson in the square which bears his name in Brooklyn. The monument is a copy of a rune-stone found at Tunc, in Norway, and stands about ten feet high. On its grey granite surface is mounted a bronze tablet with a spirited picture of Leif and his ship in relief. The sculpture is the work of the well known singer August Werner, who is now living in Seattle. The monument was secured through the efforts of a private committee whose members were Axel I. Pedersen, Oscar Halvorsen, Herman S. Swendsen, and Knut Vang.

In his speech at the dedication the Crown Prince remarked that he had been struck with the extent to which Leif Ericson was recognized by the people of this country as the first discoverer of the American continent. He mentioned not only the various monuments to Leif round about the country, and the painting of him in the Capitol at Washington, but also the frequent reference to his discovery in the speeches of governors and other high officials.

**Norwegian Training Ship Here**

At the unveiling by Crown Prince Olav of the Leif Ericson memorial in Brooklyn, forty-four young sailor boys stood at attention in front of the speakers' tribune. They were cadets from the Norwegian training ship *Christian Radich*, Captain Alf Bryde, which was moored not far away. The *Christian Radich* attracted the attention of thousands as it

came up the harbor under its own sail—a most unusual sight here, where a full-rigged ship is a rarity and almost never seen in action. After being moored for some days at the foot of the Battery, a quaint sight beneath the skyscrapers, the ship was taken to a Brooklyn pier, and the crew was of course hospitably entertained by the people of that Norwegian section of the city.

#### The "Gjøa" to Be Repaired

Roald Amundsen's tiny sloop, the *Gjøa*, with which he made the Northwest Passage, has remained in San Francisco, where it was mounted in Golden Gate Park. It was, however, neglected, exposed to wind and weather, until it was in danger of falling to pieces. When Consul Lars Christensen, the whaling magnate of Sandefjord, himself an Antarctic explorer, saw what a pass it had come to, he was so incensed that he threatened to take the *Gjøa* back to Norway, where it would be preserved in the same way as Nansen's *Fram*. This produced action. The City of San Francisco has appropriated \$25,000 to preserve the famous little ship, and a *Gjøa* Foundation has been formed to assist in the undertaking.

#### At Rebild

Rev. A. Th. Dorf of Brooklyn was the main speaker at the Fourth of July celebration in Rebild Park, Denmark. His address was formed as an eloquent eulogy of the "guest of honor"—the Declaration of Independence itself. He spoke of the conflicting ideologies of the time, one the old principle of the Declaration of Independence that all people are endowed with certain God-given rights, and the other that which regards man as merely the product of nature following physical laws according to which only the strong have the right to live. The idea that all people were equal before the law, that the individual had a right to live his own life without being under the yoke, that

life was meant to be happy—these ideals, he assured his hearers, still shone before the eyes of the American people. All those who still believed in freedom of thought, of speech, and of faith had a right to celebrate the Fourth of July whether they lived in Denmark or America.

It was estimated that about 15,000 people were present. Two gigantic flags, an American and a Danish, the gift of Danish Americans, were presented by Georg P. Jensen.

#### A Farewell to Minister Wadsted

The popular Minister from Denmark, His Excellency Otto Wadsted, is leaving Washington in order to become Danish Minister at Rome. A farewell dinner was given August 7 at the Town Hall Club in honor of the Minister and Madame Wadsted by the associated Danish societies and churches of New York.

Great regret was expressed that this country is to lose a diplomat who has represented Denmark so ably and with so much dignity and who has besides given graciously of his time and interest to the various undertakings of Danish Americans. Mr. Halvor Jacobsen was toastmaster, and Mr. William S. Knudsen was one of the speakers.

#### At the Universities

Professor A. A. Stomberg, for many years head of the Scandinavian Department at Minnesota University, is retiring this year. The authorities at the University, however, are determined to keep up the Scandinavian work and in fact to make the institution more and more a center for that work. Dr. Alrik Gustafson, Fellow of the Foundation to Sweden in 1927-28 and lately in the English Department of Cornell University, has accepted a chair in Scandinavian. Among other Scandinavians who hold important posts there are Professor Theodore Blegen, a specialist in the early history of Minnesota and of the Norwegian immi-

grants; Dr. Sverre Norborg, in the department of philosophy, who lectures on Norwegian literature, and Professor Martin B. Ruud, Fellow of the Foundation to Norway in 1912-14, now in the English Department at Minnesota.

Almost simultaneously with the retirement of Professor Stomberg comes that of another veteran in the Scandinavian field, the noted philologist Professor George T. Flom, who has been on the faculty of the University of Illinois for thirty years. He has served as editor of the *Journal of English and German Philology* and is the author of many books. His successor is Henning Larsen, Fellow of the Foundation to Norway in 1923-24, and for many years professor at Iowa University, where he has taught Old Norse and modern Norwegian besides his English courses.

#### Lieutenant Moberg Lecturing

The Swedish explorer Lieutenant Gösta Moberg, known for his intrepid penetration of the Sahara desert, on which he is one of the world's leading experts, has been lecturing in this country principally at universities. He has delivered forty-six lectures from New York to San Francisco. After visiting the West Indies and Europe, he will return to his explorations in northern Africa.

#### The Swedish Historical Museum

A John Ericsson room was formally dedicated at the Swedish Historical Museum in Philadelphia on June 24, the one hundredth anniversary of the inventor's arrival in this country. The room was presented by Dr. Julius Lincoln on behalf of the donors, and was dedicated by Mr. E. T. I. Thygesen.

## THE REVIEW AND



## ITS CONTRIBUTORS

Alrik Gustafson is this month entering upon his duties as Scandinavian professor at the University of Minnesota. . . . Elisabeth Aschehoug is a contributor to New York newspapers and magazines. . . . Ragnar Olafsson while studying at Columbia University last winter wrote for us an article on "Cooperative Iceland." He has now returned to Iceland

and will occasionally send news of current happenings to the REVIEW. . . . Einar Skavlan is editor of *Dagbladet* in Oslo, and theatrical correspondent of the REVIEW from Norway. . . . Hakon Stangerup of Copenhagen represents a point of view diametrically opposed to that of Skavlan. . . . Einar Haugen is professor of Scandinavian at Wisconsin University.



# THE AMERICAN SCANDINAVIAN FOUNDATION

*For better intellectual relations between the American and Scandinavian peoples,  
by means of an exchange of students, publications, and a Bureau of Information*

ESTABLISHED BY NIELS POULSON, IN 1911

**Trustees:** Henry Goddard Leach, President and Secretary; James Creese, William Hovgaard, G. Hilmer Lundbeck, Frederic Schaefer, Vice-Presidents; Hans Christian Sonne, Treasurer; Robert Woods Bliss, E. A. Cappelen-Smith, Lincoln Ellsworth, John A. Gade, Hamilton Holt, Edwin O. Holter, George N. Jeppson, Nils R. Johaneson, Sonnin Krebs, William Witherle Lawrence, John M. Morehead, Charles S. Peterson, John Dyneley Prince, Charles J. Rhoads, George Vincent, Harald M. Westergaard, Owen D. Young.

**Cooperating Bodies:** Sweden—Sverige-Amerika Stiftelsen, Grevturegatan 16, Stockholm, J. S. Edström, President; Chancellor Undén, Kommerserådet Enström, and Professor Svedberg, Vice-Presidents; Adèle Heilborn, Secretary; Denmark—Danmarks Amerikanske Selskab, Ernst Michaelsen, President; Viggo Carstensen, Secretary, Frederiksholms Kanal 20, Copenhagen K; Norway—Norge-Amerika Fondet, Rådhusgaten 23 B, Oslo; Arne Kildal, Secretary.

**Associates:** All who are in sympathy with the aims of the Foundation are invited to become Associates. **Regular Associates**, paying \$3.00 annually, receive the REVIEW. **Sustaining Associates**, paying \$10.00 annually, receive the REVIEW and CLASSICS. **Life Associates**, paying \$200.00 once for all, receive all publications.

## Travelling Fellows 1939-40

More than seventy Travelling Fellows are now crossing the ocean or have begun their studies for the academic year 1939-40 under direction of the American-Scandinavian Foundation or our daughter institutions abroad. These Fellows receive stipends averaging more than \$1,000. The funds are contributed by friends of the Foundation on both sides of the Atlantic who feel that educating advanced students for leadership is one of the most constructive investments they can make. Often, too, the universities assist us with scholarships. This year is the highwater mark in the number of Travelling Fellows in the history of the Foundation.

At the New York office, and usually on the dock, new Fellows receive the counsel of our Director of Students, Mr. John B. C. Watkins. As Mr. Watkins is now on vacation and will report on the activities of present Fellows in our winter REVIEW, it is proper to record here that he is a Canadian student of Scandinavian literature, a former college teacher, with an enthusiasm for all the arts and sciences and a warm sympathy for human problems. At present he is adding another language to the extensive repertoire of those that he translates and speaks—Icelandic.

## Former Fellows

The Foundation follows the careers of all our former Fellows and records the chief events in their lives in an Alumni Register. Sometimes we assist them in promotions. Former Fellows are raising a Fund to endow one of our fellowships. They have already collected \$3,000.

Professor Sven Ingvar of the University of Lund, Fellow in 1919-20, has been awarded a stipend of \$25,000 by the Rockefeller Foundation to assist his researches on diseases of the brain. Congratulations, Dr. Ingvar!

## The Norway-America Foundation

In recognition of the stimulus given the cultural relations of Norway and the United States by Crown Prince Olav in his recent American tour, Norge-Amerika Fondet is collecting by public subscription an endowment fund bearing the name of the Crown Prince. The interest from the fund will send Norwegian students to America. Kronprins Olavs Stipendiefond was presented to the Crown Prince by an official delegation shortly after his return to Norway. At that time the subscriptions had already passed \$25,000.

Norge-Amerika Fondet celebrated its twentieth anniversary and the twenty-fifth anniversary of the exchange of stu-

dents inaugurated by the American-Scandinavian Foundation by a dinner on June 2 and the publication of a fifty-one-page monograph written by Fondet's secretary, Arne Kildal. During the years the two foundations have sponsored some 200 Norwegians studying in the United States and some forty Americans studying in Norway. Mr. Kildal's book gives a literary account of the history of Fondet together with statistics and photographs.

Mr. Kildal acted as toastmaster of the jubilee dinner. The chief speech, in English, was delivered by President Hambro. The American Chargé replied. Dr. Tvedt proposed the health of our Royal Patron. Foreign Minister Koht saluted the sister institutions in Denmark and Sweden. Cables were exchanged between Fondet and the Foundation. Professor Otto Mohr spoke on behalf of the Fellows.

Perhaps the most auspicious feature of the jubilee dinner was the presence as guests of honor of the secretary of Danmarks Amerikanske Selskab, Mr. Carstensen, and of Sverige-Amerika Stiftelsen, Mrs. Heilborn. This is apparently the first time in history that representatives of the three foundations abroad which cooperate with the American-Scandinavian Foundation have compared notes at the same table. All honor to pioneer Norway!

#### The American Society of Denmark

Danmarks Amerikanske Selskab has also published a festive twenty-fifth anniversary brochure. The history and philosophy of the Society is sketched in clear outline. During the years 195 Danes have studied in the United States under its auspices and that of the Foundation, while we have sent sixty-four American students to Denmark.

Viggo Carstensen, Honorary Secretary of Danmarks Amerikanske Selskab, has been decorated Knight of the Dannebrog by His Majesty King Christian X of Denmark. Mr. Carstensen gives generously of

his time and hospitality to our students and the affairs of our daughter institution. In private life he is an able attorney and solicitor to the Supreme Court of Denmark.

#### The Sweden-America Foundation

At the international congress of the International Chamber of Commerce held in Copenhagen in June, J. Sigfrid Edström, president of Sverige-Amerika Stiftelsen, was elected President of the International Chamber of Commerce for the next two years. He succeeds Thomas J. Watson of the United States. Mr. Edström broadcast to America an address urging reasonableness and good will on the part of men of affairs throughout the world.

#### Foundation Lecturers 1939-40

Dr. Hugo Theorell, Swedish bio-chemist, Foundation Lecturer 1939, has returned to the Nobel Bio-chemical Research Institute in Stockholm, of which he is head, after a lecture tour of American universities extending from coast to coast.

Invitations now are being received by the Foundation from universities and other organizations for the following Lecturers who, under favorable conditions, may be able to visit the United States:

Dr. Gudmund Björck of Uppsala University to lecture on Homeric Problems

Dr. Gunnar Edström of Lund University to lecture on Rheumatology

Dr. Kay Fisker of Copenhagen to lecture on Architecture

Dr. Edvard Hambro of the Chr. Michelsen Institute, Bergen, to lecture on International Relations

Dr. Erik Hedvall of Lund University to lecture on Tuberculosis

Dr. Nils G. Hörner of Uppsala University, geologist of Sven Hedin's Sino-Swedish Expedition in 1929-33, to lecture on Geology

Dr. Carl Johan Lamm of Uppsala Uni-

versity to lecture on the Art and Archeology of the Near East

Dr. Gulbrand Lunde, Director of the Research Laboratory of the Norwegian Canning Industry at Stavanger, to lecture on Vitamins

Dr. Carl Schalen of Uppsala University to lecture on Astronomy

Dr. Edvard Thermanius of Gothenburg to lecture on Political Science.

#### Publications and Associates

Another sign of the good health of the Foundation is the loyalty of our Associates to our publications. For the first time in some years THE AMERICAN-SCANDINAVIAN REVIEW has more subscribers than a year ago. More than 90 per cent of our subscribers have renewed, something novel in the life of magazines. Still more remarkable is the fact that this year 100 per cent of our Sustaining Associates—those who subscribe to all the books we publish, as well as our magazine—have renewed their subscriptions of ten dollars per annum. The last Sustaining Associate to renew was an old friend in Cuba whose change of address we had not recorded.

#### Our Current Book

Life and Sustaining Associates of the Foundation will soon receive our book for 1939, *A Book of Danish Ballads*. The standard popular two-volume collection by Axel Olrik, with his illuminating introduction, has been translated by Miss E. M. Smith-Dampier, herself a ballad specialist, and is published in a large, beautifully bound volume.

#### Chapters

The Chapters are the one activity of the Foundation which has not grown materially the past year; plans are brewing in several cities for active programs in the autumn. Some of the Scandinavian Lecturers introduced by the Foundation from abroad offer subjects too scientific for the popular programs of the Chapters,

but our Chapters can always entertain them and introduce them for lectures at neighboring universities.

#### A Model Chapter Program

Time: 1 hour and 15 minutes

##### October Meeting

Introduction	10 minutes
Recital from Grieg	20 "
A.S.F. Slide Lecture	20 "
Talk	15 "
Discussion	10 "

##### November Meeting

Introduction	10 minutes
Recital from Sibelius	20 "
A.S.F. Slide Lecture	20 "
Talk	15 "
Discussion	10 "

##### February Meeting

Introduction	10 minutes
One-act Play	30 "
Scandinavian Songs	15 "
Documentary Films	20 "

##### April Meeting

Introduction	10 minutes
Three 10-minute papers	30 "
Folk Dancing	15 "
Documentary Films	20 "

#### Augustana Chapter

The prize for the best program during the past year goes to the Augustana Chapter, Rock Island, Illinois. Their programs were spontaneous, without help from the New York office. A summary of their four stated meetings may be suggestive for other chapters:

November 2, 8 p.m. Introduction. Dr. A. D. Mattson spoke on the cooperative movement in Denmark. Birger Swenson showed pictures of the Delaware Tercenary. A short business meeting.

February 17, 8 p.m. Introduction. Dean A. A. Wald spoke on a local cultural relations forum. Martin Lang gave a talk on a visit to Denmark and showed an hour-long colored film. Dean Wald spoke on Scandinavian books.

March 20, 1939, 8 p.m. Introduction. Series of discussions organized by a local cultural relations forum. Four speakers from the college fifteen minutes each. Concluding remarks.

June 6, 7 p.m. Dinner followed by business meeting. Dean Carl E. Seashore of the University of Iowa spoke on "Methods of Pursuing Research in Scandinavian-Americana."

The officers of the Augustana Chapter for the coming year are: President, Dr. F. M. Fryxell; Vice-President, William Baehr; Secretary-Treasurer, Mrs. Emil Ekblad.

#### Minnesota Chapter

The Minnesota Chapter lost its former president in the death, July 28, of the distinguished surgeon, Dr. William J. Mayo. No American institution has been more generous to the Foundation in receiving our Lecturers in medicine and allied subjects than the Mayo Foundation. The Chapter also loses this year its loyal Secretary-Treasurer, Professor A. A. Stomberg, who has reached the retirement age at the University of Minnesota.

The Minnesota Chapter will be reorganized this autumn under the leadership of the Field Secretary of the Foundation for Minnesota, Walfrid Peterson. Consuls, State officials, university presidents, and leading citizens, including Henry Adams Bellows, translator of *The Poetic Edda*, have promised Mr. Peterson their active support. The Crown Prince of Norway, during his recent visit to Minnesota, praised the Foundation.

#### Worcester Chapter

Friends of the Foundation in Worcester, Massachusetts, plan to reorganize a vigorous Worcester Chapter this autumn.

#### Springfield Chapter

Officers of the Nordic Club plan to organize a chapter in Springfield, Massachusetts.

#### Chicago Chapter

The Chicago Chapter plans to renew

activity under the leadership of its president, the Honorable Ira Nelson Morris.

#### California Chapter

Our trustee, Frederic Schaefer, recently visited the officers of the California Chapter and discussed plans for future programs.

#### Los Angeles Chapter

A Chapter will be formed in Los Angeles this autumn. All interested may communicate with the head of the Department of Comparative Literature, Miss Mildred Struble, University of Southern California.

#### New York Chapter

The New York Chapter is insured one of the most promising programs in its history under the leadership of its new president, Mr. G. Hilmer Lundbeck, Jr., son of the director of the Swedish-American Line. Associated with Mr. Lundbeck are a group of officers and committee women who have brilliant records as chairmen of large celebrations.

Officers of the New York Chapter for 1939-40: President, G. Hilmer Lundbeck, Jr.; First Vice-President, C. H. W. Hasselriis; Second Vice-President, Mrs. Rasmus M. Michelsen; Third Vice-President, James Creese; Secretary, Holger Lundbergh; Treasurer, Sven Holst-Knudsen; Assistant Treasurer, Mrs. J. P. Breivogel; Historian, Baroness Alma Dahlerup; Chairman of the Social Committee, Else S. de Brun; Chairman of the Advisory Committee, James Creese; Chairman of the Membership Committee, C. H. W. Hasselriis; Chairman of the Publicity Committee, Holger Lundbergh.

Among the members of the Social Committee are: Mrs. J. P. Breivogel, Miss Ida Gro Dahlerup; Mrs. V. F. Grahm; Mrs. Sven Holst-Knudsen; Miss Elin Lindberg; Mrs. Eric Lof; Mrs. J. P. Menasse; Mrs. Rolf Michelsen; Mrs. G. Hilmer Lundbeck, Jr.; Mrs. Viggo Rambusch; Miss Rita Singstad.

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# Danish Books for American Libraries

## 1938

Compiled by Robert L. Hansen, State Library Inspector for Denmark.  
American prices furnished by Albert Bonnier, New York.

### FICTION

**Aakjær, Jeppe.** *Over den blanke Aa.* Gyldendal. 2 vols. 382 and 354 pages. Paper bound, \$4.50

An excellent selection of Aakjær's prose made by the poet's son, Svend Aakjær of Viborg, which will not soon be superseded. Under the common title *Vadmelsfolk*, it includes a number of stories not only from this collection but also from later collections—*Fra Jul til Sankt Hans*, *Hvor Bønder bor*, and *Fjandboer*. The second volume contains the autobiographical novel *Bondens Søn*, *Af Gammel Jehannes hans Bibelshistaarri*, and Aakjær's masterpiece, *Arbejdets Glæde*.

**Becker, Knuth.** *Uroligt Foraar.* Gyldendal. 2 vols. 342 and 270 pages. Paper bound, \$2.90

A sequel to *Det daglige Brød* and *Verden venter* (See THE AMERICAN-SCANDINAVIAN REVIEW for September, 1935) those gripping, now highly comic, now deeply tragic descriptions of a boy's life, first with his bungling parents and his charming Holstein grandmother, and later in the appalling reformatory, where we meet with a remarkable group of boys of all types. In "Restless Spring" the boy Kaj is again at home and tries to learn a trade. He fails dismally in his attempt to be grown-up and is then sent out to learn farming, again without success. This book is a fine achievement in the field of the modern Danish novel. Its depiction of the tragi-comic ups and downs in the lives of people in humble circumstances will appeal to all readers.

**Bertelsen, Erik.** *Dagen bryder frem.* Jespersen og Pio. 238 pages. Paper bound, \$1.70

A good, entertaining, popular novel describing life in the barren Harboøre district on the west coast of Jutland in the second half of the last century. The book convinces the reader that just so has the sea influenced the population, just so have been the relations between fisherman and farmer, just so did the evangelical movement lay hold on them, and just so have they accepted life and death. There is much kindness in this book and much goodness—and that makes acceptable reading in these times.

**Fischer, Leck.** *Hvordan i Morgen?* Nyt Nordisk Forlag. 227 pages. Paper bound, \$1.60

"What of the Morrow?" is perhaps the most important Danish novel of the year. It is a

superbly well-taken snapshot of the Denmark of these anxious and critical years. All types from all ranks of society pass in review before us, amusing as well as tragic figures swarm by, but all alike are anxious for the morrow.

**Heinesen, William.** *Noatun.* Munksgaard. 292 pages. Paper bound, \$1.20

A novel by a Faroe Islander about a little colony of poor Faroese people who, driven out by the hopeless conditions in the parish, try to create new means of livelihood in a remote uninhabited valley—Dead Man's Valley (*Noatun*)—and who actually succeed in the struggle in spite of the resistance of nature and mankind. The book is permeated with a strong and healthy view of life and can be recommended to all types of readers.

**Laxness, Halldor.** *Sommerlandets Slot.* Translated into Danish by Jakob Benediktsen. Hasselbalch. 255 pages. Paper bound, \$1.90

An Icelandic novel about a poor native settlement and about the struggle of a poetic genius to be allowed to look at existence through the radiant imagination of the poet in spite of the most wretched human conditions ever offered any man. In truth a book about the *splendeurs et misères* of poetry.

**Söiberg, Harry.** *En Kvindes Kamp.* Gyldendal. 2 vols. 134 and 222 pages. Paper bound, \$2.45

"A Woman's Struggle" depicts the Danish provincial town of the 1880s, the dawning class struggle of the workers, the petty bourgeois horror of socialism, the comical life of the craftsmen with their singing societies and tavern convivialities. In the midst of all this we have the tragic story of a woman's pitiful struggle in her marriage.

**Tejn, Michael (pseud.).** *Katastrofe.* Braner. 205 pages. Paper bound, \$1.40

This book by a new and unknown author deals with a switchman who in a moment of forgetfulness causes a train accident. The description of the man's psychological crisis after the catastrophe is very gripping and is carried through with great talent.

**Værlöse, Jörgen.** *Jonna.* Schönberg. 199 pages. Paper bound, \$1.25

Another noteworthy debut. *Jonna* is the story of a healthy, truly Scandinavian, country girl in her struggles with wooers of various

types. The heroine is comparable in many ways to Sally Salminen's Katrina.

### PLAYS

**Munk, Kaj.** *Han sidder ved Smeltediglen.* Nyt Nordisk Forlag. 78 pages. Paper bound, 90 cents.

The Danish poet-preacher's latest stage success which has already been produced innumerable times in the theaters of the capital and the smaller cities. The play deals with the Jewish problem in Germany in such an artificial situation that it is difficult to characterize, but through the author's usual violent means it creates a powerful impression.

### GENERAL

**Alkjærsig, Kjærsten.** *Folk fra Vesterhavsskuden.* Odense. Nyt Bogforlag. 112 pages. Illustrated. Paper bound, 75 cents.

Good reliable pictures of folk life from West Jutland.

**Bertolt, Oluf.** *Pionerer.* Fremad. 230 pages. Illustrated. Cloth bound, \$1.15

With exceptional skill the author has utilized the archives of the workers' movement to write an excellent book on its pioneer days in Denmark. In the older workers it will call up memories of the bygone years of struggle, and in the younger it will induce a sense of gratitude perhaps not felt heretofore towards the generation which won the position that the younger generation now takes for granted.

**Brøndsted, Johannes.** *Danmarks Oldtid. I. Stenalderen.* Gyldendal. 376 pages. Illustrated. Cloth bound, \$10.50

This is the first volume of a large, scholarly, standard work to be complete in three volumes. The author, who is director of the Danish National Museum, has complete command of the enormous archeological material which has come to light since Sophus Müller wrote his famous work *Vor Oldtid* in 1897 and is able to write enthusiastically about it without slighting any of the scientific apparatus. The first volume deals with the Stone Age. The second, to be published in 1939, will cover the Bronze Age, and in the third the exposition will be brought up through the Iron Age to the historical period. It is with pride that the Denmark of our day sees this work rise as a monument over the individual researches of many diligent scholars in the past generation and as a living witness that Danish scholar-

ship always brings forth the right man at the right time. The work is beautifully and copiously illustrated.

**Freuchen, Peter.** *Min anden Ungdom.* Gyldendal. 233 pages. Illustrated. Paper bound, \$1.95

This book constitutes, together with *Min grønlandske Ungdom* (1936), a very personal picture of the well-known Greenland explorer's colorful career.

**Kock, Nis.** *Sønderjyder vender hjem fra Østafrika.* Reitzel. 156 pages. Paper bound, \$1.20

A continuation of Christen P. Christensen's *Sønderjyder forsvarede Østafrika*. (See THE AMERICAN-SCANDINAVIAN REVIEW for September, 1937.)

**Munk, Kaj.** *Himmel og Jord.* Nyt Nordisk Forlag. 259 pages. Paper bound, \$2.15

The celebrated poet-pastor from the little West Jutland parish at Vedersø, from which he has now taken leave of absence for an indefinite period, has here collected a number of his best newspaper articles and essays. They deal with everything under the sun and are for the most part superbly written with pathos, simplicity, sparkling satire, and radiant humor.

**Nygaard, Georg. H. C. Andersen og København.** Fremtiden. 186 pages. Illustrated. Paper bound, \$2.50

For lovers of Hans Christian Andersen and of Copenhagen this charming little book with its many amusing illustrations will be a rare treat. Both Andersen and Copenhagen are described with infectious rapture.

**Seidenfaden, Gunnar.** *Moderne arktisk Forskning.* Jespersen og Pio. 190 pages. Illustrated. Paper bound, \$1.65

An extremely interesting and exceptionally well written survey of the methods and results of modern polar exploration. We read with delight, of course, of the Scandinavian contribution, but also with deep admiration of the fine results of Russian research.

**Skrubbeltrang, Fridlev.** *Den danske Bonde 1788-1938.* Levin og Munksgaard. 250 pages. Paper bound, 90 cents.

Published by the Agricultural Exhibition on the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the liberation of the Danish peasant. A good, thorough presentation by a noted popular writer from the High School circle.

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# Swedish Books for American Libraries

## 1938

Compiled by Greta Linder, library advisor, on the basis of the annotated lists published by the Swedish Government Library Commission.  
American prices furnished by Albert Bonnier, New York.

### FICTION

**Browallius, Irja.** *Elida från gårdar*. Bonnier. 376 pages. Paper bound, \$2.25.

A dramatic human fate seen against a peasant background. The author writes with intimate knowledge and tells her story well.

**Engström, Albert.** *Läsabok för svenska folket*. Bonnier. 310 pages. Paper bound, \$3.00.

Stories by the well known humorist and depictor of folk life, with drawings by the author.

**Hedberg, Olle.** *Mota Olle i grind*. Norstedt. 255 pages. Paper bound, \$2.25.

The continuation of *Grop åt andra*, listed under current Swedish books in the Autumn Number of the REVIEW, 1938.

**Hellström, Gustaf.** *Det var en tjugande idyll*. Bonnier. 357 pages. Paper bound, \$2.55.

A continuation of the autobiographical novel series which came out 1921-25 under the title *En man utan humor*. The present volume is placed in Stockholm in the first decade of the twentieth century and pictures literary and cultural circles in the capital at that time.

**Ingel, Paul Michael** (pseud. for Ragnar Holmström). *Byn lever*. Schildt. 226 pages. Paper bound, \$1.95.

A continuation of *Byn vid havet*.

**Johansson, Johan-Olov.** *Krutgubbar*. See-lig. 208 pages. Paper bound, 60 cents.

The author adds another volume to his collection of short stories about characteristic types in the mining district of Bergslagen.

**Lilja, Gertrud.** *Så leva vi*. Bonnier. 328 pages. Paper bound, \$2.05.

Life's cruel sport with human fates is depicted with convincing truth in the characterization, especially that of the women, and with a fine artistic style.

**Martinson, Harry.** *Midsommardalen*. Bonnier. 142 pages. Paper bound, \$1.35.

In spite of some strained expressions and obscure profundities, this book, like the earlier offerings of the author, demonstrates his gift for vital nature descriptions.

**Martinson, Moa.** *Kyrkbröllop*. Tiden. 322 pages. Paper bound, \$1.95.

A continuation of *Mor gifter sig* (1936).

The author describes with terrifying realism the poverty of the lowest strata of our society, but she never becomes vulgar and, what is even more admirable, never bitter.

**Oterdahl, Jeanna.** *Vårdträdet*. Lindblad. 363 pages. Paper bound, \$1.75.

This book, though complete in itself, follows the line of *Helga Vilhelmina* (1936) and *Världen växer* (1938), describing life in a folk high school. The author, who is deeply religious in her point of view, reveals in all her books an unusual understanding of the problems of youth.

**Spong, Berit.** *Spelet på Härnevi*. Norstedt. 490 pages. Paper bound, \$2.85.

A tragic family history from the big farms of rich Östergötland is told with well documented knowledge.

**Wägner, Elin.** *Hemlighetsfull*. 258 pages. Paper bound, \$2.25.

A sequel to *Genesiskådat* (listed in the Autumn Number of the REVIEW, 1938). The former was the story of a woman from childhood to marriage; the present volume has a wider perspective, that of Europe after the War.

### POETRY

**Colliander, Selma, and Rydsjö, Daniel.** Editors. *Den svenska dikten från äldsta till innevarande tid*. Gleerup. 312 pages. Paper bound, 75 cents.

Fills, in a satisfactory way, the need for an inexpensive Swedish anthology.

**Ferlin, Nils.** *Goggles*. Bonnier. 152 pages. Paper bound, \$1.40.

Some of Ferlin's poems are too capricious and lack unity, but others are small masterpieces, hiding a bitter knowledge of life and sometimes a heart-piercing tenderness under everyday expressions or grim humor.

**Malmberg, Bertil.** *Sångerna om samvetet och ödet*. Bonnier. 96 pages. Paper bound, \$1.45.

A group of poems in which the moral problem of sin and guilt is treated with great force and pitiless clarity. The author is master of a lofty lyrical tone and rhetorical glamour possessed by few poets now living.

## GENERAL

Ahnlund, Nils. *Nya Sverige*. Diakonistytelsen. 61 pages. Paper bound, 35 cents.

Occasioned by the New Sweden Tercentenary, this well known historian gives a brief survey of the rise, development, and speedy dissolution of the colonial enterprise, written without idealization but nevertheless with a sober realization of the national values contained therein.

Björkquist, Manfred. *Makternas kamp*. Sveriges kristliga studentrörelse. 175 pages. Paper bound, 90 cents.

The author's analysis of the age is marked by his willingness to promote cooperation between Christianity and the liberal forces for world betterment.

Blomberg, Harry. *Land öppna dig! Svensk rapsodi*. Wahlström & Widstrand. 255 pages. Paper bound, \$2.05.

Articles and speeches seen against the background of the author's activity in the Oxford Group movement, but containing also impressions from his travels round about Sweden as a popular speaker.

Erixon, Sigurd. *Folklig möbelkultur i svenska bygder*. Nordisk rotogravyr. Half leather, \$20.00.

An edition *de luxe* with a thousand illustrations, many of them in color, giving views not only of the common types of furniture but also of the finest artistic products.

. . . *Svenskt folkliv. Några kapitel svensk folklivsforskning med belysning av dess arbetsuppgifter och metoder*. Lindblad. 304 pages. Paper bound, \$2.70.

An inclusive work, at once popular and authoritative, which gives a vivid insight into what has been done in the way of research into folk life. Fully illustrated.

Furuskog, Jalmar. *Det svenska järnet genom tiderna*. Ahlén. 270 pages. Bound in cloth, \$1.75.

A popular account, intended especially for young readers, of the development of the iron industry in Sweden, from the time of the first smelting of bog iron to modern stainless steel.

Hahr, August. *Svensk arkitektur*. Bonnier. 202 pages. Paper bound, \$1.85.

A survey of Swedish architecture from the earliest times to our day with especial stress

on the buildings of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Laurin, Carl G. *Barnet i liv och konst*. Norstedt. 138 pages. Paper bound, \$4.95.

An historical account of the child's position in the family, its schooling, etc. Based on wide study and brilliantly written with many unusual and fascinating pictures illuminating the text.

Wrangel, Ewert, editor. *Svenska folket genom tiderna. Vårt lands kulturhistoria i skildringar och bilder*. Vols. 1-3 and 6-7. Allhem, Malmö. Half leather, \$2.50 per volume.

This work is planned to include 12 volumes. The parts that have already appeared clearly demonstrate that, when completed, it will constitute the broadest, fullest, and at the same time most popular work on Swedish civilization in existence. The illustrations are particularly fine.

Thulstrup, Ake. *Reformer och försvar. Konturerna av Sveriges historia 1920-37*. Bonnier. 228 pages. Paper bound, \$1.45.

Continuing an earlier work in which the author dealt with the first part of the present century, he now concentrates on political, economic, and social factors in Sweden in relation to the world at large.

Thörnberg, E. H. *Sverige i Amerika, Amerika i Sverige. Folkvandring och folkväckelse*. Bonnier. 144 pages. Paper bound, 95 cents.

The connection between emigration and religious revivals is a wide subject which in this book is treated with unique mastery. Emigration was often most widespread where religious revivals had gone before. Arrived in their new country, the immigrants would often be met by the American revival movements which they in turn would pass on to their old homeland.

Wilhelm [Swedish Prince]. *Alle mans katt*. Norstedt. 356 pages. Paper bound, \$2.85.

Stories, lively and sentimental, from the author's service as a naval cadet, four years of which were spent on a sailing vessel.

Wästberg, Erik. *Gustaf Dalén*. Hökerberg. 256 pages. Paper bound, \$3.00.

Describes the dramatic and eventful life of a great man together with his revolutionary inventions.

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**Iceland. The First American Republic.**  
By Vilhjalmur Stefansson. Illustrated.  
Doubleday, Doran. 1939. Price \$3.50.

By far the most interesting part of this book is the long chapter on the history of Iceland. We are all somewhat familiar with that history in the age of colonization and the great discoveries, but most of us know little of the long dark centuries between that age and the nineteenth century when Iceland emerged into the sunlight of modern life. The perusal of that record of endurance will give us an increased respect for the Icelandic people, and we no longer wonder that they have carried a slight griminess with them from the struggle.

In 1261 Iceland came under Norway. In 1397 Iceland with Norway entered the Kalmar Union in which Denmark was the dominant partner. In accordance with the ideas of the age, Iceland was regarded by both Norway and Denmark only as a source of revenue—though relations were never as bad as between England and Ireland. The island was unprotected against attack, and even pirates from the Barbary States found their way to the coast of Iceland. Miserable poverty, wretched housing, no medical attendance, epidemics among people and cattle, crop failure, volcanic eruptions, stoppage of intercourse with the outside world owing to wars and monopolistic trade restrictions—such were some of the calamities that followed one on the heels of the other during many centuries. Few countries can show such an amazing progress in short time or such a sharp contrast between the present and a comparatively recent past.

This historical part of the book quotes extensively from Knut Gjerset's one-volume history of Iceland. The chapters on education, health conditions, business and industries, communication and transportation, social progress, and in general Iceland today, are based largely on information furnished by the commissioner of Iceland's exhibit at the World's Fair, and while valuable as reference, are of course less readable. The chapter on literature is brief and deals only with the ancient production. Modern literature and art and in general the intellectual and spiritual trends of modern Iceland have no place in the book.

It seems a pity that Mr. Stefansson did not take time to give us that broader and deeper book which Iceland deserves and which he is surely better qualified to write than anyone else.

HANNA ASTRUP LARSEN

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O. E. Rølvaag. *A Biography*. By Theodore Jorgenson and Nora Solum. *Harpers*. 1939. 446 pp. Price \$4.00.

The chief value of this volume lies in its extremely full documentation of Rølvaag's life. Large portions of it are directly quoted from his own writings, most of them previously unpublished. We are granted the privilege of following his artistic and intellectual progress from his first clumsy efforts in the emigrant diary to his last reminiscences of childhood, penned with consummate mastery just before his death. The authors have had access to all his private documents as well as to a large selection of his voluminous correspondence. They give full information about his many activities, his views on life and letters, his academic work, the origin and contents of his books, and their various revisions and translations (omitting, however, the literature about his books). This biography is a storehouse of facts and documents which no student of American or Norwegian literature and certainly no admirer of Rølvaag can overlook.

Many of the documents here printed for the first time are truly thrilling and illuminating. An example is the letter from his older brother, the gifted Johan, written when Ole Edvart's first book had appeared. Dying, Johan salutes the genius of his younger brother with the words of Moses looking into the promised land, and sends his blessing "that you may be a Björnson or a Holberg to the people of the Northwest!" The generosity and the courage of Johan are a foreshadowing of Rølvaag's own in the face of early and untimely death. By weaving together Rølvaag's words and acts into a consecutive narrative of his life, the authors have given us a compelling picture of the courage and idealism that actuated him throughout life.

If the reader is left with any feeling of dissatisfaction, it is partly due to the very bulk of the material presented. More restraint and selectivity might have made the main lines less encumbered. There is not a little repetitiousness and verbal overflow—we are told at least five times that he "set his face to go up to Jerusalem."

The bulkiness of the material has also left its mark on the picture of Rølvaag's personality. One can understand a certain caution in the writers of an official biography, but it is none the less regrettable that more does not appear of the salty, humorous tang that characterized him. He was an earthier and more vivid person than emerges from this book. Easily the best characterization of him is the quotation from Lincoln Colcord on page 367, which includes this sentence: "He retains in a rare way the viewpoint of the man with both feet flat on the ground—smokes a cigar to the very butt, swears fluently, and is chiefly interested in the elements of life." Somehow this Rølvaag has vanished amid the many quotations from class notes and lecture outlines. When he does rear his head, the authors feel an impulse to apologize and ex-

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tenuate ("If his passions were strong, his ethical idealism was equally high"—page 315). A wider point of view might here have opened vistas yet unexplored. It might have given more force to the many excellent details and the able compilation of material for which it is a pleasure to give the authors credit.

EINAR HAUGEN

**Birchland. A Journey Home to Norway.** By Joran Birkeland. Dutton. 1939. Price \$2.50.

This book is an account of a homecoming which, in some form or other, many children of immigrants have experienced, but which few have known how to picture so charmingly or interpret so sagely. The author's father was the type of immigrant who, because he comes to this country unfortified by an education, never gets over being ashamed of his origin, while his desire for self-assertion spends itself in an insatiable land hunger. Her mother, educated and refined, was too crushed by drudgery on a Montana ranch to teach her children about their Norwegian heritage. Yet it was no doubt the mother's influence, added to an awakened literary consciousness of Norway, that moved Joran Birkeland to set out for the native land of her parents.

The adventure was successful, owing to the exquisite kindness and generous hospitality of the uncles and aunts who had never seen her before. Especially mellow and attractive is the picture of life in the parsonage of Uncle Brage, the archdeacon at Lillehammer, a serene and dignified life of simple wants, fine breeding, and not too arduous duties. At Trondheim she met a varied gallery of relatives and learned the story of an uncle who had lived in Montana and came home to introduce American ways in Norway—only to be equally unhappy in both countries. A familiar type he too.

For herself Joran Birkeland felt no divided allegiance. She was "all Norwegian and all American," and in leaving Norway she felt that she carried the essence of it with her.

It is a pity a book otherwise so well written should contain mistakes that could easily have been rectified, especially in the Norwegian words and phrases which are frequently misspelled or otherwise incorrect.

H. A. L.

**What to See and Do in Scandinavia.** By George W. Seaton. Prentice-Hall. 1939. Price \$3.50.

New and up to date guide books are always welcome and this one contains much valuable information and advice to the traveller going to the Scandinavian countries, Finland, and Iceland. The author has evidently made frequent and observant trips to these countries and the tourist will find many practical hints about the more tiresome aspects of travel in this book, which the ordinary conventional guide fails to mention.

It is a pity that the personal opinions of the author obtrude so often and that he passes



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**Good Food from Sweden.** By Inga Norberg. Barrows, New York. 1939. Price \$1.75.

In the days when Fredrika Bremer's novels were as popular here as Selma Lagerlöf's are now, American reviewers used to wonder at the amount of eating that was done in her stories. Perhaps it was not because the Swedes actually ate more, but rather because they attached a certain sentiment to food. As an American traveller once put it, "In Scandinavia there is a kind of sanctification of food—here people just eat to stoke up."

Something of this sentiment clings to Swedish food; it creates the atmosphere in which the wonders of the Swedish table have been gradually evolved. "What you want more than anything else for these little dainties is imagination," writes Inga Norberg of the snacks, "ingenuity and a sense of color."

And yet the amateur cook who relied altogether on her imagination might come to grief, and we are grateful to Mrs. Norberg for supplying authentic and accurate directions not only for all the varieties of *smörgåsar* but for all the other palatable dishes that figure on Swedish menus. There are chapters on

soups, fish, meat, sauces, desserts, cakes, preserves, confectionery and, finally, beverages to wash it all down, including fruit syrups. There are also directions about the ingredients, such as for instance the spices that lend a particular tang to Swedish food.

Altogether it is a book that will be appreciated not only by the housewife but by the studio housekeeper.

H. A. L.

**Sweden: A Modern Democracy on Ancient Foundations.** By Nils Herlitz. *The University of Minnesota Press.* 1939. Price \$2.00.

There have been so many erroneous and misleading ideas about the political life of Sweden set forth in print and in lectures in this country, that this little book by one of the leading authorities on Swedish law and constitutional practice is particularly timely. Professor Herlitz was one of the Swedish Tercentenary Lecturers in 1938, and during his highly successful visit to the United States his keen mind sensed the need for an accurate presentation of the manner in which the government of Sweden is carried on. His own lectures here did much to dispel errors, and his straightforward book should reach a much wider audience.

It is of great interest to note that present laws and governmental practices in Sweden are deeply rooted in the past; that in no cases have reforms been instituted abruptly or hurriedly, and that even when the two-chamber parliamentary system was substituted for the ancient four Estates in 1866, many of the tried methods of the earlier system were carried over to the new. It is startling to learn that not until 1936 did any Swedish Cabinet function with a clear majority in parliament and that so-called State Socialism is not the property of the Socialist Party, but rather a consistent development of all Swedish government policy.

The book confirms much of the popular conception of Sweden as an ideal democracy functioning smoothly in a difficult world, but makes no claims for the perpetuation of such a state, unless the traditional virtues which have brought about this happy condition are maintained. Professor Herlitz is to be congratulated for giving us this modest and enlightening account of such important and basic factors in Swedish life.

N. A.

**Call to Reason.** By Axel Wenner-Gren. *Farrar and Rinehart.* 1938. Price \$1.50

Mr. Wenner-Gren's career has followed a pattern thoroughly familiar to Americans for a hundred years or more. He is the prototype of a hundred thousand immigrant youths who came seeking their fortunes and one of the lucky number who through ability and industry made good. In one respect, however, he is different. He kept his connections with his  
(Continued on page 284)

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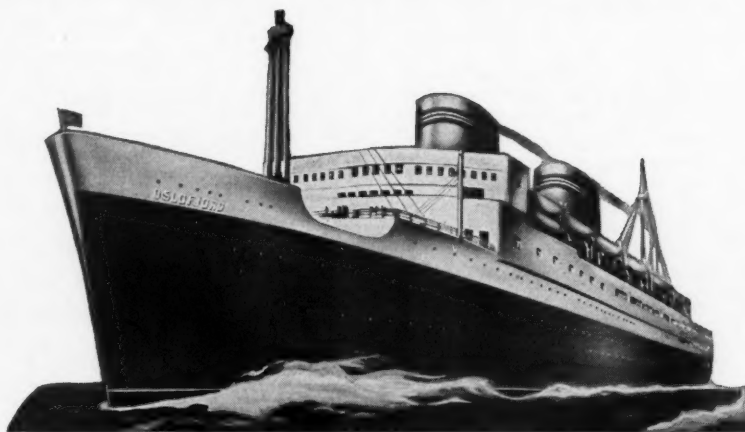
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(Continued from page 282)

native Sweden, visited his homeland often, and now doubtless feels as much at home in one country as in the other. With a foothold on two continents, he has maintained a breadth of view which his more provincial colleagues lack.

This eminently sensible little book is the expression of his philosophy, and his views are those of an enlightened capitalist. He decries the myth of Sweden as a modern Utopia, and points out that special conditions, not to be duplicated elsewhere, have produced its present order and prosperity and that these may not continue to exist. While they do, however, he thinks that certain general deductions may be made from Sweden's successful industrial and economic policies, which would be applicable and of benefit to this country. Many will differ with certain other of his ideas but no one can doubt that he writes with deep sincerity and conviction. This book should be read with the respect which it deserves.

N. A.

**Travels in the North.** By Karel Capek. Macmillan. 1939. Price \$2.25.

This is a charming and original book, written in so evocative a way that it should prove particularly enjoyable to those who already know the Northern countries, and to those who do not as well. For with great delicacy and economy of language Capek conjures up visions of lovely summer days in Denmark, sails on the Little Belt, the lights of Copenhagen, the varied and sterner beauties of Sweden, and the magnificent scenery of Norway. Through the whole book runs a thread of tender and nostalgic humor best exemplified in the description of the crew and passengers of the *Håkon Adalstein* on her cruise to the North Cape, and in Capek's own amusing little pen and ink illustrations.

Karel Capek died in Prague just before the betrayal and partition of his country. The democratic Czech republic had much in common with the free countries of the North, and Capek's delight in his travels in Scandinavia is a sure sign of where his heart lay. He could scarcely have endured life under a dictatorship. No such gay, witty, and light-hearted book will come out of Czecho-Slovakia for a long time to come.

N. A.

## BOOK NOTE

Among the books occasioned by the Tercenary of Swedish immigration is a volume entitled *The Records of the Swedish Lutheran Churches at Raccoon and Penns Neck, 1713-1786*. It is sponsored by the Federal Writers' Project of New Jersey and is a compilation of source material found in American, Swedish, and Finnish archives. Dr. Amandus Johnson has prefaced it with a brief historical survey. (American Guide Series, \$2.00.)



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